



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Second Illinois 2019 Novel Coronavirus Case Identified

Risk to general public in Illinois remains low

CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), and Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH), along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), are reporting the second confirmed case of 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCov) in Illinois. The individual is a man in his 60s and is the spouse of the first confirmed travel-related case in Illinois. He had not traveled overseas but interacted with his wife upon her return from China. This is the first person-to-person spread of the virus in the United States.

“I want to emphasize that the risk of this novel coronavirus to the general public in Illinois remains low. Local, state, and federal health officials are working to identify those who have had close contact with the individual in order to take protective measures to minimize further spread of the virus,” said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “We will continue to keep the public fully informed as additional information becomes available.”

On Friday, January 24, 2020, CDC, IDPH, and CDPH announced the first confirmed Illinois case of 2019-nCoV in a Chicago resident, a woman in her 60s who returned from Wuhan, China on January 13, 2020. The woman remains in the hospital in stable condition and is doing well. The second patient is also hospitalized in stable condition.

“We know coronaviruses are most likely to spread through close personal contact, and we know this second patient had close contact with his wife after she began to develop symptoms, so it’s not totally unexpected that he acquired the virus,” said Allison Arwady, MD, MPH, Commissioner of CDPH. “This is exactly why public health has been monitoring him closely, and why we monitor any close contacts of confirmed cases. This does not change our guidance that the risk to the general public remains low at this time. People in the community do not need to change their behavior based on this news; for example, they don’t need to cancel events, avoid mass gatherings, or wear gloves and masks in public.”

Public health officials are investigating locations where this second patient has visited in the last two weeks and any close contacts who were possibly exposed. Public health and medical professionals are taking an aggressive approach in identifying and actively monitoring individuals who were in contact with both confirmed cases in an effort to reduce the risk of additional transmission. A CDC team continues to be deployed to Illinois to support these efforts.



“If you have traveled to China or come into contact with a confirmed case and are experiencing fever, cough, or shortness of breath, contact your healthcare provider,” said Cook County Department of Public Health Chief Operating Officer Dr. Terry Mason. “We encourage everyone to practice the same germ prevention as with flu, which last year caused 35 million illnesses and just over 34,000 deaths.”

CDC is closely monitoring the outbreak of respiratory illness caused by 2019-nCoV that was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China and which continues to expand. There have been hundreds of cases worldwide, including two in Illinois, and more than 50 deaths. Symptoms reported among patients with 2019-nCoV have included mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough, and difficulty breathing.

Although this is the first person-to-person transmission in the U.S., it is still not yet clear how easily 2019-nCoV spreads from one person to another. With MERS and SARS, also novel coronaviruses, the virus was thought to have spread mainly through sneezing and coughing, similar to the flu. In general, it was spread between close contacts.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent 2019-nCoV infection. Right now, 2019-nCoV has not been found to be spreading widely in the United States, so there are no additional precautions recommended for the general public to take.

However, the following everyday preventive actions can help prevent the spread of several viruses, including seasonal flu.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

This is a rapidly evolving situation and information will be updated as it becomes available. More information can be found on the [IDPH website](#), the [CDPH website](#), and the [CDC website](#).

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