

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Health Department Monitoring Novel Coronavirus Outbreak from China

**Columbia, MD** – As Lunar New Year celebrations begin worldwide, The Howard County Health Department, along with partner agencies at the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), are actively monitoring the outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) coronavirus identified in China earlier this month.

"I encourage those with family who have traveled to Southeast Asia to carefully monitor any symptoms associated with this dangerous virus and to contact their healthcare provider immediately if concerned about an illness," said Health Officer Dr. Maura Rossman. "Anyone considering travel to China should take precautions and follow guidance from local and national health officials, including the current CDC advisory to avoid any nonessential travel to Wuhan, China."

While this outbreak has resulted in hundreds of confirmed virus cases in China and at least two confirmed cases in the United States, the CDC currently characterizes the immediate health risk to the general American public as low. There are currently no vaccines able to protect humans against this coronavirus so the best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus. Everyday preventative actions that can help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

"I appreciate our Health Department doing everything to monitor the situation regarding the coronavirus, and their efforts to inform and educate our community surrounding any developments," said Howard County Executive Calvin Ball. "We encourage all residents to follow guidelines and updates from the CDC and the Howard County Health Department."

### **Symptoms of infection with this novel coronavirus include:**

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath



# Media Release

**If you have traveled to China in the last 14 days and have a fever and cough or shortness of breath, you should:**

- Seek medical care right away. Before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Avoid further travel until the illness resolves.
- Wear a mask if you need to leave the house when sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.

*For up-to-date information about this outbreak, please monitor the Howard County Health Department social media accounts or visit our website:*

*<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Departments/Health/MM-Alerts-and-Recalls>. Find updated information from the CDC here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>*

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