Special Statement on COVID-19
March 17, 2020

On March 15, Governor Reynolds announced her recommendation to close Iowa schools for four weeks to help limit the spread of COVID-19 now that there is evidence of substantial community spread in Iowa. The Jones County Board of Health supports this recommendation.

We further encourage Jones County residents to implement the strategies outlined below in order to help protect our most vulnerable residents and healthcare workforce. Community mitigation strategies are the most readily available interventions to help slow transmission of the virus in our community. These strategies, for both individuals and businesses, include:

- Individuals sixty years of age and older with underlying conditions should stay at home and avoid gatherings or other situations of potential exposures, including travel to affected areas.
- Implement personal protective measures. These means:
  - Stay home when sick
  - Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
  - Cover your coughs and sneezes with your elbow or a tissue.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces daily.
- Reduce activities (e.g., group congregation, religious services), especially for organizations with individuals with underlying health conditions.
- Ensure hand hygiene supplies are readily available in buildings.
- Consider personal social distancing measures: avoid large gatherings, limit the number of attendees per gathering, and consider distance or working remotely or online learning when possible.
- Encourage all staff to telework (when feasible), particularly individuals at increased risk of severe illness.
- Limit non-essential work travel and gatherings.
- Postpone mass gatherings for the next eight weeks for any events with 50 or more people, per recent guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). President Trump has recommended avoiding gatherings of more than 10 people until the end of March.
- If you have been exposed to the virus or traveled to an affected area, please self-isolate and monitor your symptoms for 14 days.
Check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Iowa Department of Public Health for the most up-to-date guidance.

The Jones County Board of Health and Jones County Public Health will continue to work closely with our local, regional, and state partners. But we also need your help to reduce the impact of this virus.

COVID-19 was first linked to an outbreak in Wuhan, China, but cases have subsequently been identified in several countries, including the U.S. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Those most at risk of the virus are older adults, and individuals with underlying health conditions. More information can be found at https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus. In addition, a public hotline has been established for Iowans with questions about COVID-19. The line is available 24/7 by calling 2-1-1 or 1-800-244-7431.