

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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The Rusk County Health Department is monitoring the COVID-19 situation and is working closely with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Centers for Disease Control, healthcare and community partners to keep our community safe. This situation is rapidly changing and we will update the public as quickly as possible. There are **NO** cases of coronavirus in Rusk County.

At this time, there is no identifiable risk to the public in Rusk County. It is likely that there will be community spread in this area at some point. We can no longer contain the virus but we are working with partners to slow the spread of the virus and protect vulnerable populations. If you have questions about COVID-19, please call 2-1-1 Wisconsin or text them by texting your zip code to 898211 or go online at <https://211wisconsin.communityos.org/> to search or chat online.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in people and many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people such as with MERS-CoV, SARS-CoV, and now with this new virus (named SARS-CoV-2). The SARS-CoV-2 virus is a betacoronavirus, like MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV. All three of these viruses have their origins in bats. The sequences from U.S. patients are similar to the one that China initially posted, suggesting a likely single, recent emergence of this virus from an animal reservoir.

The complete clinical picture with regard to COVID-19 is not fully known. Reported illnesses have ranged from very mild (including some with no reported symptoms) to severe, including illness resulting in death.

**Symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath.** If you are sick, please **CALL YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER BEFORE VISITING THE CLINIC/HOSPITAL.**

**WHAT CAN YOU DO RIGHT NOW?** Individuals should practice everyday prevention measures like:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Carry and use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if hand washing is not an option.
- Do not touch your face (eyes, mouth, nose).
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Do not share eating utensils, water bottles, beverage containers or other personal items.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid close contact (6 feet or less) with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more.

By preparing as individuals and employees/employers, we can:

- **Limit the Spread:** Taking steps to limit contact with other people lowers how many people can catch the virus.
- **Help Protect Others:** Help protect those in our community who are more vulnerable, such as the elderly and people with chronic disease, from serious complications and death.
- **Reduce Strain on the Healthcare System:** The more that people can take precautions to prevent illness, the less strain on the healthcare system.