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MEDIA RELEASE

Information Advisory Warning Update

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St. Clair County Health Department Advises Residents to Prepare Not Panic for COVID-19

The St. Clair County Health Department (SCCHD) is continuously working on preparedness and response planning for COVID-19. Communication occurs daily with federal, state and local officials/partners. The Health Department is monitoring the situation at a local level. Michigan, including St. Clair County has no confirmed cases at this time.

As COVID-19 cases increase worldwide, including in the United States, it is important to be mindful of preparing for a shift from an epidemic to a pandemic. We find ourselves in a unique situation of being able to advise our community before the event happens to **prepare, not panic**. It is still uncertain when it will impact the United States, for how long, or the severity, and information is rapidly changing on a daily basis. Taking action early can help protect your health and those you care about.

These measures will help decrease and slow the spread of infection, and reduce the impact on our community:

- Pay attention, and comply, with public health requests and recommendations.
- Get your information from credible sources (CDC, MDHHS, SCCHD, etc.)
- Support your family, friends and neighbors when they need your help.
- Practice good hand hygiene; wash hands regularly. Use alcohol based hand sanitizer (60% or more) if soap and water is not available.
- Stay home when you are sick (work, school, social gatherings, events, etc.)
- Clean all “high touch” surfaces everyday with household cleaning spray or wipes.
- Cover coughs, sneezes; avoid touching your face.

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- Avoid sharing personal household items.
- Be current on your routine vaccinations.
- Call ahead before going to the doctor or hospital if you are sick (most COVID-19 infections are not serious, be watchful of concerning symptoms like shortness of breath and prolonged fever).
- Plan now for caring for loved ones who may be sick or medically compromised; and how not to expose each other.
- Keep prescription medications filled and over the counter medications on hand.
- Maintain a good supply of non-perishable food items, including pet food.
- Plan ahead on daycare options if schools are closed.
- Talk to your employer on contingency plans for absenteeism, working from home, or other strategies for the continuation of operations.

Dr. Annette Mercatante, Medical Health Officer explained, “Though we cannot yet predict timelines and severity of the disease, we are in a unique situation that we have time to prepare. Take advantage of this. We will keep the community updated. We have an extremely robust public health system across the United States and in Michigan with public health workers who are trained and experienced in outbreak prevention and management. We will get through what lies ahead.”

Visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus; www.michigan.gov or www.scchealth.co for more information. Follow us on social media @scchdmi.

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