

JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

~FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE~

Novel Coronavirus – COVID-19

1. Text Alerts/News Reports Claiming Positive Cases in Jefferson County, NY a Hoax
2. Update and Local Actions-to-Date

Date: March 11, 2020

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1. Late last evening, the Jefferson County Public Health Service was notified that an internet alert appeared stating: "STATEWIDE ALERT – Jefferson County New York has just confirmed it's first case of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) at Samaritan Medical Center." A link was also posted, asking readers to "Please visit this link for more information about how to keep yourself safe. Please contact local Health Center if you exhibit flu-like symptoms. Click on link for more details."

This alert is a hoax. Official reports of Jefferson County, NY COVID-19 status, including positive cases, will only come from 3 sources: Jefferson County Public Health Service; New York State Department of Health; or the office of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo. Official, accurate reports will be issued to the public through the media via press releases and/or press conferences.

2. A first specimen submitted to Wadsworth Laboratory in Albany on March 6, 2020 for a patient that met criteria for testing, tested negative for COVID-19. The Jefferson County Public Health Service ended monitoring of the patient March 8, 2020. A second specimen for a patient that met criteria for COVID-19 testing was submitted to Wadsworth Laboratory yesterday afternoon, March 10, 2020. The patient is now in precautionary quarantine, pending test results, in which case quarantine will end, or continue if positive. **As of this time, no individuals have been diagnosed with Novel Coronavirus – COVID-19 in Jefferson County.**

The Jefferson County Public Health Service continues to work closely with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) about testing protocols related to disease transmission. Travel history is still a consideration, along with presentation of specific symptoms.

To date, there are 173 positive COVID-19 cases in New York State, with the vast majority of cases in Westchester County. Local health departments are actively monitoring suspected and positive cases throughout New York State, and it is anticipated that the numbers of people requiring testing and monitoring will continue and grow.

All county health departments are in daily communication with NYSDOH communicable disease leadership to track and monitor exposure potential and possible disease transmission and occurrence in New York State.

The Jefferson County Public Health Service, working with the NYSDOH and the CDC continues to advise individuals to:

- Obtain vaccination for flu (everyone six months of age and older). Risk for contracting flu is high. While there is currently no vaccine for Novel Coronavirus, understand that **risk for contracting Novel Coronavirus – COVID-19 is low.**
- Do your part to stop the spread of germs:
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
 - Avoid contact with sick people
 - Stay home if you're sick

Please visit www.jcphs.org to receive the most current, up-to-date information.

The Jefferson County Public Health Service will continue to update the public regarding disease risk and status.