# Allen County Department of Health
# NEWS RELEASE

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*For Immediate Release*

## Health Department Announces Hotline and Webpage for COVID-19

*FORT WAYNE, Ind. (March 6, 2020)* – In an effort to keep the community up-to-date and informed on the novel coronavirus COVID-19, the Allen County Department of Health has developed a public hotline and webpage devoted to the evolving issue.

Community resources and links to reputable sources of updated information from various public health entities can be found at www.allencountyhealth.com/covid-19.

Additionally, Department staff are now operating a COVID-19 hotline at (260) 449-4499 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to answer questions and address concerns from the public. Any afterhours callers to the hotline will receive a recorded message with some frequently asked questions about the virus as well as Department website information, which can be accessed at any time.

Allen County has no confirmed or suspected cases at this time. However, Governor Eric J. Holcomb and the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) announced Friday the first presumptive positive case of COVID-19 in a Marion County resident, and the governor issued a public health emergency declaration in response. A presumptive positive case means the patient tested positive at the ISDH Laboratories and samples will be sent to the CDC for final confirmation.

The virus was first identified in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China and has rapidly spread to countries around the world, including the U.S. Reported illnesses of COVID-19 have ranged from mild symptoms, including fever, cough and shortness of breath, to severe illness and death. There is currently no vaccine or treatment for this virus.

Human coronaviruses most commonly spread from an infected person to others through:

- Respiratory droplets released into the air by coughing and sneezing;
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands;
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands;
- and Rarely, fecal contamination.

Department officials want to remind the public that with the first presumptive case in Indiana confirmed, preparation (and not panic) is important. The best way to protect yourself from any respiratory illness is to:

- 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.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

The CDC does not recommend people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. You should only wear a mask if a healthcare professional recommends it. A facemask should be used by people who have COVID-19 and are showing symptoms to protect others from the risk of infection.

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