ALLEGHENY COUNTY
ALWAYS INSPIRING

Allegheny County Announces First Two Positive Cases of COVID-19

PITTSBURGH – County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and incoming Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) Director Debra Bogen were joined by ACHD officials and representatives from Allegheny Health Network, UPMC and Allegheny County Emergency Services to provide information on the first COVID-19 cases in Allegheny County and response.

"Yesterday, the county announced a number of additional steps that corresponded with revised guidance from the Health Department," said Fitzgerald "Those steps were taken to mitigate any impact on our community should we have local COVID-19 cases. That day is today, but working together, we are prepared and ready to continue to serve the public and protect our community."

There have been two cases of COVID-19 confirmed in Allegheny County. The individuals are both adults, one in their 70s and one in their 60s. Neither person required hospitalization, and both are currently in isolation at home.

The individuals are both City of Pittsburgh residents that reside in the same household. At this point in ACHD's investigation, it is believed that both acquired COVID-19 during out of state travel. In order to protect patient privacy and confidentiality, additional information regarding these cases cannot be released.

ACHD has begun a contact investigation. Officials have and will continue to follow up with all individuals identified as close contacts of the two known cases and will enforce appropriate quarantine measures.

"Knowing that many residents are likely to be concerned about potential exposure or interaction with the two cases, it's important that we remind the community that COVID-19 can only be spread through close contact," said Bogen.

While at this time there is no evidence of community spread in Allegheny County, the Health Department anticipates additional local confirmed cases in the coming days. As a result, ACHD would like to reiterate its current guidance and recommendations designed to minimize the potential for the virus spreading in our community. Specifically, residents and organizations throughout the county should follow these proactive mitigation measures:

- Suspend large gatherings, events, conferences of 250 individuals or more.
- Avoid traveling to recreational activities like gyms, movie theaters and shopping malls.

ACHD officials are also encouraging religious leaders to exercise discretion in order to mitigate the spread of illness. ACHD continues to consult with government and non-government partners throughout the county and will modify these recommendations as appropriate to protect the health of the public.

The Health Department continues to field many questions regarding COVID-19 testing in Allegheny County. ACHD is not currently testing for the virus; however, the PA-DOH state laboratory and commercial laboratories are testing. Healthcare providers are reminded that they do not have to receive approval from public health agencies, including PA-DOH and ACHD, and can submit specimens for testing through commercial laboratories.

Over the past month, ACHD has received hundreds of calls from concerned citizens about potential illness with COVID-19. Up until this past week, very few individuals were approved for testing at the PA-DOH given limited testing capacity and more stringent CDC guidance. Within the past few days, that guidance has been relaxed and, as a result, ACHD expects there to be expanded specimen collection availability next week.

As of this date, ACHD has screened hundreds of individuals and submitted specimens from 26 county residents for testing by the state laboratory. This number is not all-inclusive as it does not contain tests submitted to commercial laboratories.

The following proactive hygiene measures are strongly encouraged to help stop the virus from spreading in our community:

- Washing your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Coughing or sneezing into your elbow and not your hands.
- Frequently cleaning highly-touched surfaces.
- Staying home if you're sick.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, which include fever, cough and shortness of breath, please stay at home and contact your primary-care provider to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19. If you do not have a primary care provider and are not sure if you need tested, please contact the Health Department at 412-687-ACHD (412-687-2243). If you need to seek immediate medical care, please call 9-1-1 for assistance, or phone ahead before going to a doctor's office or emergency department to allow staff at these locations to prepare for your arrival.

Allegheny County will continue to communicate with the public as more information is gathered. For the latest information on COVID-19, visit www.alleghenycounty.us/coronavirus. If you are not yet a subscriber to Allegheny Alerts, we encourage you to create an account at www.alleghenycounty.us/alerts and to subscribe for COVID-19 alerts under the categories of Health Department/Health & Environment. ACHD provides a daily update at 11 a.m. via Allegheny Alerts and additional notifications as information becomes available.

# # #

Office of County Executive Rich Fitzgerald
101 County Courthouse │ 436 Grant Street │ Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Phone: 412-350-6500 │ Fax: 412-350-6512
www.alleghenycounty.us

Follow us: allegheny alerts | facebook | google+ | instagram | linkedin | pinterest | twitter | youtube