

OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR GLENN JACOBS



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KCHD announces first case of COVID-19 in Knox County

Knoxville, Tenn. - The Knox County Health Department (KCHD) has received confirmation from the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) of the county's first presumptive positive case of COVID-19. While awaiting confirmation of results from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), KCHD and TDH will treat presumptive positive cases as positive and follow CDC guidelines to protect public health and limit the spread of infection.

"Knox County has been preparing for the possibility of a case of COVID-19 since it was first reported in the United States," said Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs. "Our Knox County Health Department is coordinating our response efforts and will continue to work to reduce the spread of infection and protect the health of all people in Knox County."

This person was exposed overseas and is an isolated case. They have been in isolation since they returned and have not required hospitalization. Per standard public health protocols for infectious disease response, KCHD epidemiologists will work with TDH and follow CDC guidance to contact and monitor anyone who may have been exposed to this isolated case. COVID-19 is not currently widespread in Knox County or Tennessee.

"We understand the concern surrounding COVID-19, but we hope Knox County citizens can take some comfort in the fact that we were expecting a case, and that we routinely utilize extensive plans and national best practice to respond to all reportable infectious diseases in Knox County," said KCHD Senior Director Dr. Martha Buchanan. "The most important thing the public can do is to follow the CDC guidance, which includes the standard hygiene practices we recommend to prevent the spread of flu and other viruses."

Per current evidence, while symptoms of COVID-19 can range from mild to severe, the vast majority of cases are mild. Fever and respiratory symptoms, such as coughing and shortness of breath, are some of the common symptoms. Other typical cold symptoms such as runny nose and a sore throat are generally not associated with COVID-19.

The best precautions the public can take are simple, but they are important and effective:

- Wash your hands regularly
- Stay home if you are sick



- Avoid contact with those who are sick
- Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze/cough
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Get a flu shot if you haven't already

KCHD has launched a COVID-19 Public Information Line. The hotline number is 865-215-5555 or individuals may call toll-free at 888-288-6022. The information line will be available from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Call volume is expected to be high. Callers are urged to be patient if they receive a busy signal and try their call at a later time. People with concerns about their health should contact their health care providers. Additional information about COVID-19 can be found on [KCHD](#) and [CDC](#)'s website.

About Knox County Health Department

The first health department in Tennessee to achieve national voluntary accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is dedicated to ensuring the conditions in which every resident can be healthy. As a chief health strategist for the community and with more than 260 employees, KCHD's broad scope of work includes convening partners to improve community health, identifying community health threats, investigating disease outbreaks, conducting extensive outreach and education, preparing for public health emergencies, providing and connecting the public with medical care, enforcing food safety and air quality laws, and more. For more information, visit www.knoxcounty.org/health.

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