

March 9, 2020 – Coronavirus update from Home Sweet Home Ministries

*We are aware of the growing concern regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and while there are no cases in our local area, we are taking proactive measures so we can be prepared in the event the disease spreads to McLean County. Protecting the health and safety of Home Sweet Home Ministries' clients, volunteers, and staff is our highest priority. Containing the spread of a contagious disease presents challenges and will require everyone in the organization to take precautions to protect the health and safety of all members of our community while working to maintain HSHM's operations and responsibilities.*

*In the coming days and weeks, we will continue planning for the unlikely event of an outbreak of Coronavirus. Our efforts will focus on the health and safety of our community while maintaining our responsibilities as a homeless service provider. We have already met with the staff at the McLean County Health Department in charge of communicable disease control and will continue to do so as events develop.*

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get Coronavirus by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. It is important to remember that the immediate health risk remains low for the general public.

Patients with Coronavirus have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

There is currently no vaccine to protect against Coronavirus. The best way to prevent infection is to take everyday preventive actions, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash
- Stay home when you are sick or have flu-like symptoms
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

There is no specific antiviral treatment for Coronavirus. People with Coronavirus can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including the Coronavirus. Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of Coronavirus to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. People who think they may have been exposed to Coronavirus should contact their healthcare provider immediately.