



For Immediate Release

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Revised Guidance Issued for Attending Large Gatherings in Marion County

(Indianapolis, March 11, 2020) – As part of its ongoing efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and protect the community, the Marion County Public Health Department has updated its guidance for attending large events or gatherings.

Director and Chief Medical Officer, Virginia A. Caine, M.D., is now advising that seniors with a chronic medical illness such as heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease, should reconsider attending large public gatherings. This may include festivals, sporting events and other activities where large crowds gather.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), early information out of China where COVID-19 first started shows that people in this group are at higher risk for complications from this virus.

Dr. Caine, an infectious diseases specialist, recommends they take extra measures to put distance between themselves and other people, at least six feet away, to further reduce the risk of being exposed to the virus.

At this time, Marion County has one presumptive positive case of COVID-19 in a person who is believed to have been infected outside of Indiana and not from local transmission. This is one of six cases reported in the state of Indiana as of March 10.

By taking everyday precautions, everyone can help reduce the spread of illness such as COVID-19 and flu:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Wash hands after touching surfaces in public places.
- Avoid touching the face, nose or eyes.
- Routinely clean and sanitize frequently-touched surfaces at home and work.

Dr. Caine says to pay particular attention for potential COVID-19 symptoms including, fever, cough and shortness of breath. Anyone who feels sick or develops these symptoms should stay home and call their regular doctor or medical provider. Calling ahead with information about symptoms can help them provide care while keeping others from getting exposed or infected.

Anyone who has returned from visiting a country on the CDC's Level 2 or Level 3 Travel Health Notice within the last 14 days should avoid attending large gatherings as well.

Updated information about COVID-19 is available at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html> (CDC)

<https://www.in.gov/isdh/28470.htm> (Indiana State Department of Health)

<http://marionhealth.org/homeslider/coronavirus-faqs/> (Marion County Public Health Dept.)

A COVID-19 hotline is also set up for Marion County residents: (317) 221-5500.

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