

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Two COVID-19 Deaths Reported in State Community transmission identified in Hall County

LINCOLN – The first and second deaths related to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) were reported to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) today.

The first death was a man in his 50s with underlying health conditions from Douglas County. He had contact with a known COVID-19 case out of state and had been self-isolated since March 11 at home, according to the Douglas County Health Department - <https://www.douglascountyhealth.com/latest-news>.

The second death is a Hall County resident in her 60s with underlying health conditions who was recently hospitalized - <https://cdhd.ne.gov/>. Because of state statutes, DHHS is not able to release names or other details about the two people.

“We send our condolences to both families,” said Dr. Gary Anthonie, Chief Medical Officer and Director of Public Health for DHHS. “Unfortunately, from the beginning, we knew there would be deaths from COVID-19 in Nebraska and this underscores the potential seriousness of the disease and the importance of the measures we’re taking as individuals and as a state to help slow the spread of the virus.”

Hall County has reported three cases of COVID-19, which include the resident above. These cases have been identified as community spread. Community spread is when people have COVID-19 but public health officials are unable to identify how or where they became infected.

A state Directed Health Measure (DHM) will be issued and go into effect Saturday, March 28 at 6:00 a.m. for the following counties: Hall, Hamilton, Merrick, York, Seward, Butler and Polk. York, Seward, Butler and Polk are being included in the DHM because they border counties with community spread.

Certain people are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 including older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes and lung disease, according to the CDC.

People in these higher-risk groups should:

- [Stock up on supplies](#), including extra necessary medications.
- Take [everyday precautions](#) to keep space between yourself and others.
- When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash your hands often.
- [Avoid crowds](#) as much as possible.
- Avoid [cruise travel](#) and non-essential air travel.

- If there is a COVID-19 outbreak in your community, [stay home](#) as much as possible to further reduce your risk of being exposed.

Recent data shows that the virus is also affecting younger people. A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report said 20% of those hospitalized for COVID-19 in the U.S. were 20-44 years old.

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough, fatigue, and shortness of breath or difficulty breathing. People who are concerned they may have COVID-19 should self-isolate and call ahead to their primary care provider to be screened over the phone.

Everyone can help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections by:

- Avoiding close contact with sick people and stay home if you are sick.
- Washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Here's where to find tools and resources for individuals and families, schools, communities, businesses, healthcare facilities, and first responders on the DHHS website - <http://dhhs.ne.gov/coronavirus> and CDC's website – <https://www.cdc.gov/covid19>.

DHHS opened a statewide coronavirus (COVID-19) information line to help answer general questions and share the latest information and resources with Nebraskans to help keep them informed. The number is (402) 552-6645; hours of operation are 8 a.m.-8 p.m. CST, 7 days a week.

DHHS launched a new data dashboard that provides daily updates to the state's COVID-19 case totals. You can find it at <http://dhhs.ne.gov/coronavirus>.

DHHS will continue to update Nebraskans through the DHHS website and on Facebook and Twitter as we have new information. The CDC's website is also a good resource for COVID-19 information - <https://www.cdc.gov/covid19>.