



## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Jan. 24, 2020

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## DPH Working to Identify and Prevent Spread of Coronavirus in Georgia

**ATLANTA** – The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) is closely monitoring the outbreak of 2019-nCoV (coronavirus) occurring in China and regularly coordinating with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. DPH has not confirmed any novel (new) coronavirus cases to date, however the situation could change.

DPH is advising healthcare providers statewide to be alert for patients who have traveled from Wuhan, China and present with fever and respiratory symptoms. The Department sent out a detailed medical advisory to healthcare providers on reporting, testing, specimen collection and healthcare infection control recommendations for potential coronavirus cases. Healthcare providers who suspect 2019-nCoV infection in a patient should report them immediately to DPH by calling **1-866-PUB-HLTH (1-866-782-4584)**.

To detect possible cases of coronavirus infection early and prevent further spread, the United States began actively screening incoming travelers from Wuhan at five select airports, including Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in Atlanta. DPH has protocols for transport, evaluation and testing of potential coronavirus patients, and will work with the airport quarantine station to facilitate and coordinate referrals.

This outbreak of coronavirus began in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and continues to spread. The outbreak now includes hundreds of confirmed infections and a growing number of deaths in several countries. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing respiratory illness in people and others that circulate among animals, including camels, cats and bats. The beginning of this outbreak has been linked to a large seafood and animal market in Wuhan. A growing number of patients reportedly have not had exposure to the animal markets and many healthcare workers have become infected, indicating person to person spread is occurring.

Because this is a novel coronavirus, we do not know everything about it yet. Based on patients with confirmed coronavirus, symptoms include fever and signs of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); case-patients also develop pneumonia. The CDC says symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 after exposure. There is currently no specific antiviral treatment for 2019-nCoV infection or vaccine to prevent coronavirus infection.

Currently there are two confirmed cases of coronavirus in the United States (Illinois and Washington) and more cases are expected. The CDC says the overall risk of coronavirus to the general public is low, but the best way to prevent infection of any respiratory virus is:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or use a tissue to cover it, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

For more information about coronavirus, log on to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. Guidance for travelers can be found at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/watch/novel-coronavirus-china>.

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### **About the Georgia Department of Public Health**

The Georgia Department of Public Health is the lead agency in preventing disease, injury and disability; promoting health and well-being; and preparing for and responding to disasters from a health perspective. For more information about DPH, visit [www.dph.ga.gov](http://www.dph.ga.gov).