



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & WELFARE

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**NEWS RELEASE--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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First case of novel coronavirus in Idaho has been confirmed

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) and Central District Health (CDH) have confirmed the first positive case of novel coronavirus in a female over the age of 50 in the southwestern part of the state.

She recently returned from a conference in New York City and was alerted by conference coordinators after three people with confirmed novel coronavirus infections, who were also in attendance at the conference, boldly shared their information and test results to help alleviate contact investigations for potential spread among fellow conference attendees.

The individual is home recovering from mild symptoms and did not require hospitalization. This is Idaho's first case, but there have been 1,629 total cases and 41 deaths in the United States.

The patient's treating physician acted appropriately after ruling out influenza to gather patient's travel history, exposure risk, and symptoms that were consistent with the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19. Clinical specimens were collected and sent to the Idaho Bureau of Laboratories, where laboratory testing confirmed the infection.

Epidemiologists with Central District Health are working with DHW to determine reasonable risk criteria for locations visited by this patient upon their return to Idaho, and any close contacts of that individual who were possibly exposed. If other people are found to have possibly been exposed, health officials will provide guidance to them and will monitor them closely for symptoms.

Additional case-specific information about this individual is confidential and will not be released.

“We are concerned for this person, but we’re glad her symptoms have been mild. I’m impressed at how well the clinic where the sample was collected minimized the risk to staff and other patients,” said Elke Shaw-Tulloch, administrator for the Division of Public Health in DHW. “We understand that this is scary, but we encourage everyone to do their part to stay healthy and prevent illness: Wash your hands often, cover your coughs and sneezes, stay home if you’re sick, and stay away from sick people.”

Idaho Public Health officials are monitoring the rapidly changing novel coronavirus situation very closely, domestically and internationally. We are working with the Governor’s Office and other state agencies including the Idaho Office of Emergency Management, local public health districts, and healthcare providers around the state, as well as CDC and other states.

“We have been preparing for this since January when the first confirmed case of coronavirus was confirmed in the United States,” Gov. Brad Little said. “We have taken many proactive steps, and we are in a good position to respond. Our focus is on slowing the spread of coronavirus to protect vulnerable individuals and preserve capacity in our healthcare facilities.”

People ill with this coronavirus in other states and countries have reported mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. If Idahoans have these symptoms and they become severe, they should call a healthcare provider to discuss their options.

For the general public, no additional precautions are recommended at this time beyond the simple daily precautions that everyone should always take. It is currently flu and respiratory illness season, and flu activity is still high and expected to continue for a number of weeks. Public health officials recommend getting a flu vaccine, taking everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs, and taking flu antivirals if prescribed.

For Idaho-specific information about the novel coronavirus, please visit <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/>.

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