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**NEWS RELEASE--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **First case of novel coronavirus reported in south central Idaho**

BLAINE COUNTY – South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) and the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) have confirmed a positive case in south central Idaho of novel coronavirus in a female over the age of 50. This is the first in this area and the second in Idaho. The first was announced Friday in southwest Idaho during a joint press conference with Gov. Brad Little.

The individual in this new case is at home recovering from mild symptoms. She lives in Blaine County. She did not require hospitalization. The investigation has revealed she traveled out of state in the two weeks before symptoms began, but self-isolated as soon as she began showing symptoms. Her physician's office was prepared and wearing proper protective gear when the individual was evaluated. Her movement history is being closely evaluated.

"This virus is spread across the globe now," said Melody Bowyer, SCPHD Director. "We knew it would reach our corner of the world, and we took that time to prepare our investigation team. They are now working tirelessly to identify who might have been exposed and make sure they are evaluated."

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

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.

When someone begins showing symptoms for a contagious disease, public health's role is to monitor and respond to positive test samples. At that point, an investigation team is deployed to trace the individual's movements to identify other people who may have been exposed. Public health does not do any testing for COVID-19 or store testing kits.

"We have been preparing for this since January when the first case of coronavirus was confirmed in the United States. We have taken many proactive steps, and we are in a good position to respond," said Idaho Gov. Brad Little. "Our focus is on slowing the spread of coronavirus to protect vulnerable individuals and preserve capacity in our healthcare facilities. We are committed to working with our partners to provide the public timely, accurate information about what individuals can do to help slow the spread of coronavirus."

If Idahoans have these symptoms and they become severe, they should call a healthcare provider to discuss their options.

"We expect that we will have multiple cases in Idaho, but we do not want this to be cause for alarm. We encourage everyone to continue to take precautionary measures to slow the spread of COVID-19 in the state," said Elke Shaw-Tulloch, administrator for the Division of Public Health. "If you believe you have been exposed, make sure to self-isolate. If you need medical attention, please call your healthcare provider in advance of a visit to discuss your symptoms and next steps. Everyone doing their part to limit exposures and spread will help keep us all safe."

Precautionary measures include:

- Washing your hands regularly and well
- Staying home when you are sick
- Coughing/sneezing into a tissue and throwing it away immediately
- Practicing social distancing- keeping six feet between yourself and others

South Central Public Health District has extended their hotline hours this weekend to run today from 1 to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. You can reach the hotline at (208) 737-1138.

For Idaho-specific information about the novel coronavirus, please visit <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/>. For south central Idaho information please visit [phd5.idaho.gov/coronavirus](https://phd5.idaho.gov/coronavirus).