



**NEWS RELEASE--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: March 19, 2020

## **Community spread of COVID-19 detected in south central Idaho, associated with already-confirmed case**

BLAINE COUNTY – South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) and the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) have confirmed a case of novel coronavirus with no out-of-state travel and no identified contact with another person with confirmed COVID-19.

The case was announced Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, in a press release. The individual is a male from Blaine County in his 40s. He presented very mild symptoms and is recovering well at home.

Community spread means at least one person has been infected with the virus in an area who is not sure how or where they became infected. The individual under investigation did not travel and had no identified contact with another person with COVID-19. Public Health officials expect more confirmed cases in the community.

“It no longer matters where it started, this virus is now in our community. It is important that we take precautions to slow the spread and protect the most vulnerable among us,” said Logan Hudson, SCPHD Public Health Division Administrator. “We urge residents to follow public health recommendations to stay home as much as possible to help protect themselves and their communities.”

To slow the spread of the virus, please take the following recommended actions:

- Work or engage in schooling from home whenever possible.

- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10 people.
- Avoid eating or drinking at bars, restaurants, and food courts where social distancing is not achievable; instead use drive-thru, pickup or delivery options.
- Avoid discretionary travel, shopping trips, and social visits.
- Cancel visits to nursing homes, retirement, and long-term care facilities unless to provide critical assistance.

So far, the investigation has not linked this community spread case with the first four cases reported previously in Blaine County, or to the single case reported in Twin Falls County. The SCPHD epidemiology team has been working diligently to identify any people who had close contact with any of the confirmed cases and is monitoring them for symptoms.

South Central Public Health District is running two hotlines for information about COVID-19. One in English at (208) 737-1138, and one in Spanish, at (208) 737-5965. These hotlines are currently running from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday.

Please refer to <https://phd5.idaho.gov/coronavirus> for the latest local numbers and <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/> for Idaho-specific information and guidance