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Please report all relevant information and direct all media inquiries to the SCN Duty Desk:

Email: DutyDesk@securecommunitynetwork.org | Phone: 844.SCN.DESK

SCN BULLETIN: Coronavirus (COVID-19) - Considerations and Interim Guidance for Community Organizations

Distribution: SCN Leadership, Organizational Leadership, Security Directors, and Facility and Security Liaisons

Scope

The following interim guidance, compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is provided to assist in organizational decision-making concerning the spread of the novel Coronavirus, COVID-19.

As of 11 March 2020, there have been a total of 124,663 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 4,550 coronavirus-related deaths across 112 locations internationally. Currently, 1,135 confirmed cases and 32 deaths have been reported in the United States. The mortality rate of victims is now calculated to approximately 3.4%, though individuals who have health vulnerabilities are significantly more at risk. The elderly, infirm, or very young should be observed carefully when symptoms of COVID-19 are witnessed within a community. As with most respiratory

illnesses, coughing and sneezing have been reported to be factored in spreading the virus. The information contained in this bulletin is current as of 11 March 2020 at 5:50 pm ET.

Who Is This Guidance For?

This interim guidance is intended to help organizations prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Why Is This Guidance Being Issued?

Information provided should help organizations and their partners understand how to help prevent the transmission of COVID-19. It also aims to help organizations and partners react quickly should a case be identified.

What Is The Role Of Organizations In Responding To COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) virus. There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. At this point, the best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes it. Stopping transmission (spread) of the virus through everyday practices is the best way to keep people healthy.

Organizations, working together with local health departments, have an important role in slowing the spread of diseases to help ensure safe and healthy communities. Organizations serve individuals and visitors from throughout the community. All of these people may have close contact in the organizational setting, often sharing spaces, equipment, and supplies.

Guidance For Organizations Which Do Not Have COVID-19 Identified In Their Community

To prepare for possible community transmission of COVID-19, the most important thing for organizations to do now is plan and prepare. As the global outbreak evolves, schools should prepare for the possibility of community-level outbreaks. Organizations want to be ready if COVID-19 does appear in their communities.

Leadership can take steps to help stop or slow the spread of respiratory infectious diseases, including COVID-19:

- **Review, update, and implement emergency operations plans (EOPs).** This should be done in collaboration with local health departments and other relevant partners. Focus on the components, or annexes, of the plans that address infectious disease outbreaks.
 - Ensure the plan includes strategies to reduce the spread of a wide variety of infectious diseases (e.g., seasonal influenza). Effective strategies build on everyday policies and practices.

- Ensure the plan emphasizes common-sense preventive actions for individuals. For example, emphasize actions such as staying home when sick; appropriately covering coughs and sneezes; cleaning frequently touched surfaces; and washing hands often.
 - Ensure handwashing strategies include washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
 - Reference key resources, such as those linked under the resources section of this bulletin, while reviewing, updating, and implementing an EOP.
- **Develop information-sharing systems with partners.** Information-sharing systems can be used for day-to-day reporting (on information such as changes in absenteeism) and disease surveillance efforts to detect and respond to an outbreak. Local health officials should be included as key partners in information-sharing plans.
 - **Monitor and plan for absenteeism.** Review the usual absenteeism patterns among community members and staff and alert local health officials of any large increases in absenteeism, particularly if absences appear due to respiratory illnesses (like the common cold or the flu, which have symptoms similar to symptoms of COVID-19).
 - Review attendance and sick leave policies. Encourage community members and staff to stay home when sick. Use flexibility, when possible, to allow staff to stay home to care for sick family members.
 - Identify critical job functions and positions, and plan for alternative coverage by cross-training staff.
 - Determine what level of absenteeism will disrupt the continuity of services/operations.
 - **Establish procedures for individuals who are sick.** Establish procedures to ensure individuals who become sick or arrive sick are sent home as soon as possible. Remember, organizations are not generally expected to screen community members or staff to identify cases of COVID-19. The majority of respiratory illnesses are not COVID-19. If a community has cases of COVID-19, local health officials will help identify those individuals and will follow up on the next steps.
 - **Perform routine environmental cleaning.** Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, countertops) with the cleaners typically used. Use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label. Organizations should also provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (e.g., keyboards, desks, remote controls) can be wiped down before each use.
 - **Create communications plans for use with the community.** Plans should include strategies for sharing information with the community.

- **Review CDC's guidance for businesses and employers.** Review this CDC [guidance](#) to identify any additional strategies an organization can use.

Guidance For Organizations With Identified Cases Of COVID-19 In Their Community

If local health officials report that there are cases of COVID-19 in the community, organizations may need to take additional steps in response to prevent spread. The first step for organizations in this situation is to talk with local health officials. The guidance provided here is based on current knowledge of COVID-19. As additional information becomes available about the virus, how it spreads, and how severe it is, this guidance may be updated. Leadership are encouraged to work closely with local health officials to determine a course of action for their programs or organizations.

- **Determine if, when, and for how long programs may need to be halted or organizations closed.** Temporarily halting programs and closing organizations is a strategy to stop or slow the further spread of COVID-19 in communities.
- **Work in close collaboration and coordination with local health officials to make dismissal and large event cancellation decisions.** Organizations are not expected to make decisions about canceling events on their own. Organizations can seek specific guidance from local health officials to determine if, when, and for how long to take these steps. Large event cancellations or school dismissals may be recommended for 14 days, or possibly longer if advised by local health officials. The nature of these actions (e.g., geographic scope, duration) may change as the local outbreak situation evolves.

If an ill community or staff member was present in an organization prior to being confirmed as a COVID-19 case:

- **Local health officials may recommend temporarily closing an organization if a community or staff member was present prior to being confirmed as a COVID-19 case.** Local health officials' recommendations for the scope and duration of closures will be made on a case-by-case basis based on the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 and the specific cases in the impacted community.
- **Organizations should work with the local health department and other relevant leadership to communicate possible COVID-19 exposure.** This communication to the community should align with the communication plan in the organization's emergency operations plan. In such a circumstance, it is critical to maintain confidentiality of individuals as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and, where relevant, other privacy acts or legislation.

- **If a community or staff member has been identified with COVID-19, organization administrators should seek guidance from local health officials to determine when individuals should return to the facility and what additional steps are needed for the community.** In addition, individuals who are well but are taking care of or share a home with someone with a case of COVID-19 should follow instructions from local health officials to determine when to return to the organization.

If organizations are closed, they should consider the following steps:

- **Temporarily cancel extracurricular group activities and large events.** Cancel or postpone events such as large meetings, conferences, social outings or other events.
- **Discourage individuals from gathering or socializing anywhere.** Discourage gatherings at places like a friend's house, a favorite restaurant, or the local shopping mall.
- **Ensure continuity of programming, to the extent possible.** Review continuity plans, including plans for the continuity of e-convening and meetings.

Resources

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19 Overview](#) - Centers for Disease Control
- [World Health Organization COVID-19 Advice For The Public](#) - World Health Organization
- [Johns Hopkins Global COVID-19 Case Map](#) - John Hopkins Hospital
- [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) - Centers for Disease Control
- [Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans](#) - U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- [Get Your Community and Faith-Based Organization Ready for Pandemic Flu](#) - Centers for Disease Control
- [Pandemic Influenza Continuity of Operations Annex Template Instructions](#) - U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- [Business Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist](#) - Centers for Disease Control
- [Public Health for Mass Gatherings: Key Considerations](#) - World Health Organization

- [Travel Tips: Coronavirus](#) - U.S. Department of State's Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC)
- [U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory - Coronavirus Disease](#)
- [Jewish Federation of North America Coronavirus Resource Page](#)

Report Suspicious Activity

Follow established protocols to report suspicious activity – to include contacting local law enforcement and/or the relevant suspicious activity reporting authority – and contact the SCN Duty Desk at DutyDesk@securecommunitynetwork.org or by calling 844-SCN-DESK.

For questions, please contact the SCN Duty Desk at DutyDesk@securecommunitynetwork.org

FOUO

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