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3/26/2020 #1 Crowley/Otero Update: 2nd POSITIVE COVID-19 Case In Otero County

Please take the time to read and understand this entire message. I know it is long, but read the whole thing anyway.

Hello to all. This morning (Thursday 3/26/2020) the Otero County Health Department (OCHD) received a lab report on a resident from Otero County that has tested positive to COVID-19. We now have two positive cases in Otero County, and one in Crowley County.

Out of respect for patient privacy, we will only release the following information (No other information will be released at this time):

- ✓ The person
 - was asymptomatic, which means was not showing any symptoms.
 - was placed into quarantine while awaiting test results.
 - was tested because OCHD received and distributed to medical providers extra test kits from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) for the exact purpose of increased disease surveillance. Our extra test kits allowed us to find this case, so we were actively looking for this.
 - was placed into isolation after receiving the positive test results.
 - is a resident of Otero County.
 - At this point, our investigations lead me to believe this **is limited community spread (transmission)**. According to CDPHE:
 - “Limited community spread (or transmission) means there are cases and outbreaks in certain communities where people became infected, and we are unable to identify the source.” This is exactly where we are with our positive cases right now.
 - “Widespread community spread (or transmission) means there are cases and outbreaks in many communities where people are spreading the virus to other people.” We are definitely not at widespread community spread (or transmission) right now.
 - OCHD has two main priority teams working right now:
 - Disease control and containment.
 - Public health order compliance.
 - We are communicating and working closely with law enforcement agencies throughout Crowley and Otero Counties. In fact, a few minutes ago I had a meeting with local law enforcement (Sheriff’s offices, police departments), emergency management, and the Colorado State Patrol. We have a unified vision and game plan regarding public health order compliance, and OCHD is receiving terrific support from law enforcement!

The CDC has documented asymptomatic COVID-19 carriers, and apparently so have we.

A thorough epidemiological investigation is currently underway, with absolute priority given to contact investigations, risk assessments, and isolation/quarantine information (disease control and containment measures) based upon the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. We will specifically be looking into any possible connections between our other two cases.

Here is what you can do right now:

- ✓ **COMPLY WITH ALL PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS CURRENTLY IN PLACE, INCLUDING THE NEW “STAY AT HOME” ORDER. THE STATE PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS CAN BE FOUND HERE:** <https://covid19.colorado.gov/public-health-executive-orders-explained>
- ✓ One of the best things you can do RIGHT NOW is to get accurate, up-to-date, reliable information, and check for information updates frequently. Make this a PRIORITY in your household!
- ✓ Once again (yes, I am repeating myself), understand what OCHD’s two main priorities are right now:
 - Disease control and containment measures.
 - Understanding and complying with the public health orders.
- ✓ Here are OCHD phone numbers that you can call:
 - Regarding the positive COVID-19 case: 719-383-3050
 - Regarding public health orders: 719-383-3040
- ✓ Find out how you can protect yourself and your family: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#anchor_1584386949645
- ✓ Find out if you are at higher risk: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#high-risk>
- ✓ What you can do to prepare for an outbreak (widespread community transmission): https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#anchor_1584388857241
- ✓ Find out about symptoms and testing: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#anchor_1584388857241
- ✓ Learn how to reduce fear and take care of yourself: <https://covid19.colorado.gov/reducing-fear-and-taking-care-yourself>
- ✓ Important Note: These website locations and the information is subject to change, please check back often.
- ✓ If you are sick, please call your healthcare provider and they will provide you with instructions on what to do next. If you do not have a healthcare provider, please call Valley Wide Health Systems (VWHS) Convenient Care at 719-383-5500. ALWAYS call your healthcare provider FIRST before you go to the office, so they can give you instructions.
- ✓ Only go to the Emergency Room (ER) if it is an emergency. Only you can decide if it is truly an emergency or not, but emergencies typically are life threatening and time sensitive.

Please remember our “game plan” or “end game”, whichever phrase you like the best:

- ✓ Our vulnerable populations are at a greater risk, so we want to keep COVID out as long as possible to protect them.
- ✓ We want to keep COVID out as long as possible to allow time to develop and manufacture a vaccine and/or antiviral treatment. Our vulnerable populations and Health Care Workers (HCW) with direct patient access will be prioritized.
- ✓ There is a critical worldwide shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as respirator masks, gloves, etc.. We want to keep COVID out as long as possible to conserve the use of PPE and get more resupplied. We need to protect our front-line HCWs so they can continue to help us.

- ✓ And, of course, we just do not want COVID-19 here!
- ✓ My community updates and other information can be found at the following website: www.oterogov.com

All media requests will go through our Public Information Officer (PIO), Amy Tanabe, at 719-383-3000.

Please stay tuned for more updates, and remember to:

- ✓ Read, understand, and comply with all public health orders!
- ✓ Stay home if you are sick and, if needed, call your medical provider.
- ✓ If you are in a high risk group, take extra precautions.
- ✓ Cover your cough and/or sneeze.
- ✓ Keep your fingers and hands away from your face.
- ✓ Wash your hands a lot.
- ✓ Stay informed by trusted and reliable sources. Be careful about believing what you read on social media sites. Trusted sources/websites:
 - OCHD: <https://www.oterogov.com>
 - Centers for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov>
 - CO State Health Department: <https://www.colorado.gov/cdphe>
- ✓ Do these things so you will be prepared, and not scared.

Until next time,

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