March 13, 2020

Message from Mayor Bill Schickel

**For Cerro Gordo County specific information, call the local COVID-19 Call Center at (641) 494-3547 or (641) 494-3546 (8 am-4:30 pm, Monday-Friday). Citizens can also call 2-1-1 for statewide information.**

Mason City Mayor Bill Schickel and staff from the City of Mason City, CG Public Health and MercyOne North Iowa are encouraging residents to closely monitor current reports related to the COVID-19 outbreak and to make responsible, personal decisions on how they can practice personal “social distancing” to slow the transmission of COVID-19 and minimize illness and death.

Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds recently signed a Proclamation of Disaster Emergency, activating the disaster response and recovery aspects of the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management’s Iowa Emergency Response Plan. The proclamation authorizes state agencies to utilize resources including personnel, equipment and facilities to perform activities necessary to prevent, contain and mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 virus.

Based on current information, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Cerro Gordo County. Local public health officials continue to work with local healthcare providers and are in frequent communication with Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) officials as statewide, national, and international conditions evolve.

Social distancing measures are taken to restrict when and where people can gather to stop or slow the spread of infectious diseases. Social distancing measures can include limiting large groups of people coming together, including canceling events.  Many local and regional educational institutions, special events, and businesses are announcing efforts to encourage social distancing and advise patrons on staying home when they are ill.

“We are asking everyone to carefully evaluate prior to attending gatherings and events when there will be a large number of people present. This is a serious situation and it is important to follow the advice of our health officials and healthcare providers and practice common sense during this time. While government and healthcare have specific roles in preparing for and responding to this outbreak of Coronavirus, we are also asking for the public’s help. I encourage residents to think carefully about how they can make good decisions to help prevent the spread of the virus,” stated Mayor Bill Schickel.

CG Public Health encourages residents to rely on information regarding COVID-19 from their website at <https://cghealth.com/?topic=coronavirus>. Posters are available on this website for businesses/organizations to print off and hang around the office. They recommend placing hand sanitizer around the office and having disinfectant wipes for employees to wipe down their work stations/areas daily.

They also recommend individual residents take these action steps:

* Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol if soap and water are not available.
* Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
* Avoid close contact (at least 6 feet distance) with people who are sick or experiencing respiratory symptoms such as cough
* Stay home when you are sick.
* Cover your mouth with your upper arm or tissue when coughing or sneezing.
* Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
* Take social distancing measures. Restrict where and when you gather with others.

For more information, visit the following websites:

Cerro Gordo Department of Public Health at <https://cghealth.com/?topic=coronavirus>.

MercyOne North Iowa at <https://www.mercyone.org/northiowa>

City of Mason City at [www.masoncity.net](http://www.masoncity.net/)

Iowa Department of Public Health at [https://idph.iowa.gov](https://idph.iowa.gov/)

**For Cerro Gordo County specific information, call the local COVID-19 Call Center at (641) 494-3547 or (641) 494-3546 (8 am-4:30 pm, Monday-Friday). Citizens can also call 2-1-1 for statewide information.**