



Connie Beck, Director
Social Services | Public Health | Mental Health

news release

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Officials say there are no local cases of novel coronavirus at this time

This afternoon, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services declared novel coronavirus a public health emergency. Local officials say there are still no cases in Humboldt County at this time.

Two people in Southern California were recently diagnosed with the virus. Closer to home, state officials announced today the first confirmed case in Santa Clara County.

Of more concern locally are the considerable number of flu cases in the community.

"Currently, Humboldt County residents have a significantly greater likelihood of being exposed to flu than to novel coronavirus," said Hava Phillips, supervising public health nurse in charge of the Communicable Disease Unit for the Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services Public Health Branch.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates there have been at least 15 million flu illnesses, 140,000 hospitalizations and 8,200 deaths in the U.S. from flu this season.

While there is no vaccine for novel coronavirus (dubbed 2019-nCoV), the flu vaccine is readily available.

Phillips said coronavirus and flu are both respiratory illnesses with symptoms including fever, cough and shortness of breath, and guidelines to prevent infection from them are identical:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home if you are sick and limit contact with others
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue then throw it in the trash and wash your hands

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

The CDC is continuing to monitor an outbreak of the novel coronavirus that was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The Humboldt County Public Health Communicable Disease Surveillance Unit is prepared to investigate and respond to any reports of the virus locally.

If you think you have been exposed to the novel coronavirus, contact your primary health care provider. You may also contact your provider to get a flu vaccine.

To make an appointment for a flu vaccine at the Public Health Clinic, call 707-268-2108. The clinic is located at 529 I St. in Eureka. The cost of the flu vaccine is \$17, but no one will be turned away for inability to pay.

For more information and updates about the novel coronavirus, visit the CDC's webpage at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/.

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