

February 28, 2020

Coronavirus Notes and Recommendations

Superintendents and other town leadership are receiving advisories from various authoritative sources including the Governor, the Commissioner of Education, the Department of Health, UNCAS Health, and the Center for Disease Control. Below is a synopsis of materials and advice the district has received to date. Note that we have no concerns at this time.

Locally, our district leadership team has met to review guidance and we have scheduled meetings with our health team to assess our preparedness and develop response plans should the virus heavily affect our area. We are implementing extra precautions with additional disinfection in schools and on buses. We will also be in regular communication with town leadership and our local Health Director Patrick R. McCormack, MPH who is positioned at UNCAS Health and statewide leadership organizations. If you have any questions about district operations please do not hesitate to contact us at: 860-889-6098.

“The most important aspect of preparedness costs nothing at all – **calm.**” (The Washington Post, February 26, 2020. Do not panic.

- Wash your hands regularly and for at least 20 seconds at a time.
- Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing.
- If you are sick, stay home.
- Drink lots of fluids.
- You do not need to stockpile. You need to be prepared.
- The CDC does not recommend people who are well wear masks. Common surgical masks block droplets coming out of a person who is sick but are not airtight enough to protect you from air and the virus from getting in.
- The CDC has a useful checklist for families.
- Be mindful of where you are and keep your distance
- BE AWARE – watch what you READ there is much misinformation and price gauging.
- BE KIND! Being prepared and being vigilant can sometimes lead folks to be impatient, even scared. Be kind, patient, and work together to care for each other.

Below is a memo issued from our local Health Director.

Coronavirus Guidance: UNCAS Health

Superintendents and Heads of School,

The local Directors of Health participated in a weekly conference call with the Connecticut Department of Public (CT DPH) yesterday, 2/27/20.

Below are the key points from the call:

- CDC is saying it is now time to plan for the next phase which is mitigation. CT DPH said, **“We all knew containment was unlikely. Mitigation is to slow things down.”**

- **There will be no vaccine (more than one year for development and safety trials) and there are no antivirals available for this virus.**
- **Now is time to plan for COMMUNITY MITIGATION.** 1. Keep healthcare system functioning. 2. **Make sure business continuity plans are in place (including schools, colleges, and universities).**
- **Remember, the measures we use for community mitigation will depend on the severity of the illness (such as whether to close schools). Still questions about the mortality rate of COVID-19.**
- CT DPH is still getting traveler notifications (only China) including others with current travel advisories. No current recommendation for monitoring people from other countries.
- **Schools and upcoming Spring break:** expectation is that many schools have Spring break coming up. What if student goes back to China? If they are not permanent US residents/citizens, they will not be able to return regardless of symptoms.
- Strong consideration should be given to travel to Italy and South Korea and understand changes can happen rapidly and non-US residents may not be able to return. CT DPH says recommendation is that people reconsider travel out of the country. Getting home might be difficult in March and April. No sustained community transmission in the US currently. People need to be flexible and stay informed where sustained community transmission is occurring in and out of the US.
- **Assume that Governor will declare a public health emergency at some point in time.** If widespread community transmission in CT, it will likely trigger the emergency declaration.
- **Several elements of Pandemic Flu Plans may be adapted and serve as a framework (such as social distancing).** There is no vaccine and no priming dose for COVID-19.
- Don't have great info on how long people are sick and what the illness looks like. Hearing 1-2 weeks of illness.
- **Schools with visitors from other countries?** No recommendation for individuals coming from countries other than China. If those visitors are well, they can go forward with the visit.
- How to handle families/students returning from Italy? If students are well, go about usual activities. Those with illness, stay home. No system in place to identify and screen travelers from anywhere other than China currently.

Please refer to the links below for community mitigation guidelines:

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/rr/pdfs/rr6601.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/planning-preparedness/community-mitigation.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/>

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