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News Release

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COVID-19 Update for Southwest Utah

WASHINGTON, IRON, KANE, BEAVER, & GARFIELD COUNTIES, UT – The spread of COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) has met the criteria to be declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Although there have been no confirmed community-spread cases of COVID-19 in the five counties served by the Southwest Utah Public Health Department (SWUPHD), some people who have been exposed or infected through travel and do not require medical treatment are being allowed to return to their homes where they will be isolated from contact with others and monitored according to recommended protocols.

“The risk of COVID-19 to the average resident remains low,” says Dr. David Blodgett, SWUPHD Health Officer and Director. “However, we are preparing for any local cases that may emerge. We have been working closely with healthcare providers in the process of screening and testing patients.”

The SWUPHD encourages residents to practice measures to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases in the community:

- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and running water or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Cover your face using a tissue or arm when coughing or sneezing.
- Wearing a mask (including N95 masks) is not useful unless you are sick (to protect others) or in close contact with someone who is sick, such as a patient or family member.
- Stay informed by visiting coronavirus.utah.gov.
- If you're worried about whether you may have COVID-19, please call the Utah Coronavirus Information Line at **1-800-456-7707**.
- Review or create preparedness plans for yourself, family, business, or organization in case of temporary restrictions or closures of schools, churches, events, or other gatherings.

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Pandemic response plans have been refined and practiced on a regular basis since 2002 by the SWUPHD and community partners including city and county governments, emergency managers, hospitals and healthcare providers, EMS (Emergency Response Services), fire departments, law enforcement, churches, school districts, businesses, and volunteers. We have access to critical resources if needed and are in frequent contact with state and federal public health authorities regarding the latest recommendations for minimizing the impact of COVID-19 in our area.

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The mission of the Southwest Utah Public Health Department is to protect the community's health through the promotion of wellness and the prevention of disease. Visit our website at www.swuhealth.org