

**For Immediate Release**

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**Washtenaw County Health Department Reports 7 Additional COVID-19 Cases**

*Number of Washtenaw cases double; community spread now likely*

YPSILANTI, Mich., March 19, 2020 – Washtenaw County Health Department is reporting seven additional presumptive positive cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) as of March 19, 2020 at 10:00 am. The total case count is now 14, doubling our previous total.

There is evidence of community spread locally. Five of the new cases had no known contact with confirmed cases of COVID-19 or recent travel. The other two cases had recent history of domestic travel. All cases are in adults. Washtenaw County Health Department has been working with the individuals to identify and notify close contacts.

“Evidence of community spread means we will change how we respond to local cases, especially as the numbers of tests increases every day,” says Jimena Loveluck, MSW, Washtenaw County Health Officer. “But, we must remember this is exactly why we have community mitigation strategies and unprecedented restrictions in place. Our collective goal remains to slow the spread of cases as much as possible. Together, we can do this. Take every possible opportunity to practice prevention and social distancing.”

Because there is evidence of community spread, the Washtenaw County Health Department is no longer naming public low-risk exposure locations. Residents can assume there is a possibility the virus may be present when they are in public places in the community. The Health Department is not announcing evidence of community spread to cause panic, but to reinforce that people should be taking all recommended prevention measures.

“Assume the possibility for infection exists, as it does with many common illnesses. Most people will recover at home without medical care,” says Juan Luis Marquez MD, MPH, Medical Director with Washtenaw County Health Department. “Isolating at home if you’re sick and contacting your health care provider by phone for guidance will help prevent additional spread and make the best possible use of critical health care resources.”

- Follow [community mitigation recommendations and orders](#).
  - The White House and CDC [recommended to avoid gatherings of over 10 people](#).
  - Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed an [Executive Order](#) to prohibit events over 50 people or assemblages in shared indoor spaces over 50 people
  - Workplaces should encourage staff to tele-work when feasible, particularly individuals at risk of severe illness. Employers should also limit gatherings.

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- Everyone should practice social distancing. Social distancing means keeping six feet between people as much as possible. Learn more about social distancing, monitoring, quarantine, and isolation: [English](#), [Spanish](#)
- Individuals at risk of severe illness, such as older adults and people who have severe underlying chronic medical conditions, should stay at home as much as possible and keep away from others who are sick.
- Clean your hands often. Scrub with soap for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer if you cannot wash.
- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care. Call ahead before going to your healthcare provider. Learn [what to do if you are sick](#).
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. Immediately wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently-touched surfaces.

Washtenaw County [declared a state of emergency](#) yesterday to shift resources quickly to assist residents, businesses and communities affected by the novel coronavirus.

The Health Department is now updating the number of cases, hospitalizations, and recovered persons on [their website](#). The [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services](#) is providing statewide information at 2 p.m. each day, including some demographics.

REMEMBER: [Discrimination harms public health](#). People of Asian descent, including Chinese Americans, are not more likely to get coronavirus than anyone else.

### **Washtenaw County Health Department**

The Washtenaw County Health Department promotes health and works to prevent disease and injury in our community. Our mission is to assure, in partnership with the community, the conditions necessary for people to live healthy lives through prevention and protection programs.

The Washtenaw County Health Department has achieved national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board. Visit us at [washtenaw.org/health](http://washtenaw.org/health) or call 734-544-6700.

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