KNOX COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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COVID-19 Refresher

There is a lot of misunderstanding about the virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and the seriousness of it. Human coronaviruses commonly cause mild to moderate illness in people. However, the emergence of novel (new) coronaviruses, such as SARS and MERS, and now COVID-19, have been associated with more severe respiratory illness.

How is COVID-19 spread? The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-person. This could include people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

The symptoms of COVID-19 can include a fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath. People should also be aware of emergency warning signs that require urgent medical attention such as: trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, bluish lips or face. This list is not all inclusive. Please contact your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

Those most at risk for the virus are adults 60 plus and people with compromised immune systems. While many people may not fall into this category, it is important to remember that we **ALL** come into contact with those at risk daily. You may have mild or even no symptoms of the virus, but you can pass the virus to someone who is at higher risk. Individuals who experience any of these symptoms should call their medical provider.

Even if you are young, or otherwise healthy, you are at risk and your activities increase the risk to others. It is critical that you do your part to slow the spread of COVID-19. Residents can continue to follow the guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). The Knox County Unified Command asks that these simple steps be followed:

- Be prepared to stay home when sick. Have a week's worth of groceries, fever-reducing medication, and water on hand to take care of yourself or family members if infected.
- If you are an elderly individual or an individual with serious underlying health conditions stay home and away from other people.
- Avoid social gatherings such as birthday parties, cookouts and playing with friends.
- Use drive-through, pickup, or delivery options.
- Avoid leisurely shopping trips and social visits.

- Avoid taking the entire family on shopping trips. Only one individual should be leaving the home for necessary supplies.
- Use other common-sense precautions such as frequently washing your hands and coughing into your sleeve, or using a tissue and then washing hands.

Individuals who have serious illness, should call their medical provider for next steps, including possibly being tested for COVID-19. "Currently, Knox County medical providers have enough supplies to test individuals in the area who meet the criteria and need to be tested," states Michele Gabriel, Public Health Administrator at the Knox County Health Department. With that said, not everyone needs to be tested for COVID-19. Most individuals have mild illness and are able to recover at home without medical intervention.

The Knox County Unified Command reminds county residents to use trusted sources for the latest information on COVID-19 such as; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov and Illinois Department of Public Health www.dph.illinois.gov. The following webpage, http://gis.ci.galesburg.il.us/COVID , is the official source of information on COVID-19 numbers for Knox County. For general questions about COVID-19, call the hotline at 1-800-889-3931, email dph.sick@illinois.gov or call your Knox County Health Department at 309-344-2224.