



Office of the Governor

Doug Burgum
GOVERNOR



NEWS: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First case of novel coronavirus confirmed in North Dakota as work continues to prevent spread

Case involves one individual in Ward County; press conference scheduled for 9 a.m. Thursday; public hotline activated

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BISMARCK, N.D. (MARCH 11, 2020) – The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDOH) today confirmed the state’s first presumptive case of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in a Ward County resident, Gov. Doug Burgum announced with health officials.

“We have been planning and preparing for this since January, and our top priority remains the health, safety and well-being of all North Dakotans,” Burgum said. “With the North Dakota Department of Health and its partners at the state, local and federal levels, we are working together to stay on top of this rapidly evolving situation.”

“We encourage citizens to be prepared and not panic – to base their actions on facts, not fear,” Burgum added. “North Dakotans should take this virus seriously, stay informed and follow recommendations for reducing the spread of COVID-19, including washing hands frequently and staying at home when they are sick. We continue to work closely with our hospitals, nursing homes, schools, the business community and other stakeholders to ensure that every appropriate measure is being taken to protect vulnerable populations and all citizens.”

Prior to becoming ill, the individual who tested positive for COVID-19 had traveled out of state where he had contact with a person who has since tested positive for the disease. The Ward County man, who is in his 60s, has not been hospitalized and is currently self-isolating and recovering at home. The public health investigation is ongoing.

As the NDDOH awaits confirmation testing from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), team members are working to identify people who may have come into close contact with the individual in order to prevent further spread of COVID-19.

The NDDoH has tested 27 individuals for COVID-19. Twelve tests came back negative and results for 14 tests are still pending.

“As our team of experts work aggressively and around the clock to protect the health of North Dakotans, we’re coordinating and in regular communication with other entities such as health care providers, schools, universities, child care providers, businesses, churches and others,” North Dakota State Health Officer Mylynn Tufte said. “The NDDoH has planned, is prepared and our goal is to make sure North Dakotans are as prepared as possible. Everyone has a role to play in reducing the spread of COVID-19.”

Burgum and NDDoH officials including Tufte, Division of Disease Control Director Kirby Kruger and Emergency Preparedness Section Chief Tim Wiedrich will discuss the state’s response to coronavirus during a press conference at 9 a.m. Thursday, March 12, at the NDDoH Division of Emergency Preparedness, 1720 Burlington Drive in Bismarck. The press conference will be streamed live on the NDDoH [Facebook page](#).

Individuals can help protect themselves from COVID-19 by practicing everyday preventative behaviors. Stay home when sick, cover coughs and sneezes, frequently wash hands with soap and water and clean frequently touched surfaces.

Symptoms of COVID-19 in people who have been exposed can include fever, cough and shortness of breath. The symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure. Reported illnesses have ranged from people with little to no symptoms to people being severely ill and dying. Individuals who think they may have COVID-19 should call their health care provider first before going to the clinic, unless it’s an emergency.

The CDC [recommends](#) adults over the age of 60 and individuals with multiple underlying health conditions refrain from group activities. These individuals are twice as likely to have serious COVID-19 illness. If you go out, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash hands often.

North Dakotans should prepare for situations common during a pandemic such as cancelled travel and events, school and business closures, avoiding large crowds, and the need to stay at home when you’ve been exposed to a family member who has been sick. Visit the CDC website for considerations on how to [prepare](#) at home, work and school, as well as [travel guidelines](#).

For questions related to COVID-19, the public can call the NDDoH health hotline at 866-207-2880 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. Individuals who need medical advice should contact their health care provider.

For the most updated and timely information and updates related to COVID-19, visit the NDDoH website at www.health.nd.gov/coronavirus, follow them on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) and visit the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus.

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