



CITY OF NORWALK, HEALTH DEPARTMENT

www.norwalkhealth.com

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137 East Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06851

March 4, 2020

Dear Community Partner,

The Norwalk Health Department (NHD) is working with local, state, and national partners to monitor the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). While there are no cases reported in Connecticut and the risk to the general public in the United States remains low, we are advising that community partners review their policies and plans as a precaution in case the situation evolves. At this time, there is no need to cancel programs or events. Additionally, there is no need for staff to wear masks.

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

- At the time of this writing, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Connecticut, although there are cases in neighboring states.
- The virus is very new, and health authorities continue to carefully watch how it spreads. Current understanding about how the virus spreads is largely based on what is known about similar viruses.
- The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers the health risk from COVID-19 to be low among the general public. At this point you are more likely to catch the flu or common cold, which can present with similar symptoms to COVID-19.
- Presently, you are at higher risk if you have traveled to an affected country or have been in contact with someone who has confirmed COVID-19.
- Based on current information the CDC recommends avoiding unnecessary travel to several countries. [Updated travel information related to coronavirus can be found here.](#)

WHAT CAN WE ALL DO NOW?

Encourage staff, clients, families, and students to follow these precautions at all times:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. [Learn more about proper handwashing here.](#)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Stay home for 14 days if you have just returned from a country for which the CDC has issued a [level 3 travel health advisory](#).
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing. If you use a tissue, throw it in the trash.
- Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Practice other “infection protection” habits. For example, replace handshakes with elbow-bumps or no-touch greetings, push elevator buttons with your knuckle instead of your fingertip, don’t share cups or utensils, etc.

WHAT ELSE CAN COMMUNITY PARTNERS DO?

We encourage you to prepare for the possibility of community-level outbreaks:

- Review and update emergency operations plans, including policies related to illness-related facility closures.
- Revisit sick policies for staff, clients, and students.
- Encourage staff and clients to stay home when they are sick.
- Establish procedures to separate sick staff and send them home as soon as possible.
- Perform routine environmental cleaning at your organization. Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label. [Please see this list of commercially available cleaning products.](#)
- Advise staff, clients, and students who have planned travel to take appropriate steps. Check the [CDC's Traveler's Health Notices](#) for the latest guidance and recommendations for each country. Be advised that travel health notices may change as the situation evolves, including in the middle of a trip.
- **Check CDC or State Guidance for detailed information for your organization:**
 - [Businesses/Employers](#)
 - [Long-Term Care Facilities](#)
 - **Child Care Providers and Schools:** [From the CDC](#); [From the CT Department of Public Health](#)
 - [Community and Faith-based Organizations](#)
- Alert NHD at (203) 854-7776 if you see large increases in employee absenteeism due to respiratory illnesses or flu-like symptoms.

This situation is changing and evolving every day. We ask all our community partners to help us get reliable, up-to-date information to the public. Please be wary of misinformation. Instead, rely on reputable sources of information and encourage your clients and employees to do the same:

- [CDC](#)
- [CT Department of Public Health](#)
- [City of Norwalk/Norwalk Health Department](#); [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#).

Feel free to share these fact sheets and other communication materials with staff and clients.

- [CDC Stop the Spread of Germs Poster](#)
- [CDC What you Need to Know about COVID-19 Fact Sheet](#)
- [CDC What to Do if you are Sick with COVID-19 Fact Sheet](#)
- [Listing of all CDC Handouts and Posters \(in English, Spanish, and Chinese\)](#)
- [CDC Videos](#)

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to support the health of our community. Please feel free to reach out with questions by calling (203) 854-7776 or via email healthinfo@norwalkct.org.

Sincerely,



Deanna D'Amore, MPH
Director of Health