

February 28, 2020

Dear Charlestown Residents:

Due to widespread media attention, most of you are aware of the evolving outbreak of respiratory illness in China caused by a novel coronavirus (COVID- 19). To date, there have been a small number of cases in the United States with the vast majority of infections occurring in China. Experts are closely monitoring the situation as there has been increasing spread in countries outside of China. While risk remains relatively low in the U.S., there will likely be additional cases in the days ahead. The medical providers and healthcare teams are closely monitoring the situation and are prepared to take appropriate steps in the event the need arises.

To prevent spread of the virus to the United States, the Department of State has issued a level 4 alert that citizens should not travel to China, and should exercise increased caution when traveling to nearby areas such as Hong Kong and Macau. The CDC also advises that non-essential travel to South Korea should be avoided and that older adults with chronic medical conditions should avoid travel to Japan, Italy and Iran. There will likely be other international locations with travel advisories in the coming days as the outbreak spreads and we will provide updates as the situation evolves.

To aid in our prevention efforts, please ask any potential community guests to refrain from visiting if they have been to China or South Korea in the past two weeks. They should also not visit if they have been in contact with someone who has the infection, or someone who was exposed to it in the past two weeks. This is in keeping with our general request of guests to not visit if they have flu like symptoms.

If you are planning a trip to China or another location outside of the US, please consult your medical provider to discuss the necessity of travel, how to protect yourself, and what to do when you return. We have a similar plan in place for our employees.

While coronavirus is in the news, our primary concern is prevention of influenza which is widespread right here in the U.S. Please take these following steps which are recommended by the CDC for prevention of flu (these steps are also effective against coronavirus):

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning.

Following these steps can often make the difference in keeping you well through the flu season.

Please reach out to the Charlestown Medical Center at 601-8590 or 410-247-5602 with any questions or concerns, or log onto the CDC Coronavirus website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

Sincerely,

*Matt Narrett M.D.*

Chief Medical Officer

Erickson Living