



## Monroe County Health Department

Monroe County, Indiana

Health Department	Futures Family Planning Clinic	Public Health Clinic
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
March 11, 2020

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### HEALTH BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING COVID-19

**BLOOMINGTON** – The Monroe County Health Department is communicating closely with the Monroe County Emergency Management Director, City of Bloomington, Indiana University, IU Health, school systems, and local emergency personnel to monitor the situation, protect public health and safety, and coordinate our preventive and mitigating actions.

On March 6, 2020, Governor Holcomb, in Executive Order 20-02, declared a Public Health Emergency for Coronavirus disease outbreak 2019 (see attached). The Governor designated the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) as the lead State agency to coordinate the emergency response activities among the various state agencies and local governments. As such, the Monroe County Health Department (MCHD) is designated to take the lead for coordination in Monroe County. MCHD is in regular contact with and receiving updates from ISDH.

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a novel, or new, coronavirus which has not been previously identified. COVID-19 is most often spread by close contact (within 6 feet), through respiratory droplets produced by an infected person coughing and sneezing; and from touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose, and possibly the eyes.

Health Administrator Penny Caudill, recommends the following practices to employers and individuals within the community:

- Employers should encourage telecommuting where possible. Consider temporary changes to sick leave and/or hardship policies to address employee needs; as well as implementing a contingency staffing plans that will include flexible scheduling as well as temporary changes and exceptions to leave policies, in order to allow employees to take care of themselves or family members.
- Employers should encourage the cancellation of discretionary professional and personal travel at this time.



- Organizations should cancel or postpone non-essential large gatherings. Consider the use of virtual meetings.
  - *With the exception of the Board of Commissioners and County Council meetings, Monroe County Government has cancelled all other Board and Commission meetings through March 25. Please check the County website for updates.*  
*[www.co.monroe.in.us](http://www.co.monroe.in.us)*
- Prepare as a household for possible closures of schools or workplaces and limitations on travel.
- Follow the CDC [guidelines](#) to protect yourself and others from illness, including the following:
  - Clean your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
  - Cover coughs and sneezes
  - Stay home when you are sick
  - Wear a facemask if you are sick
  - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
  - Avoid close contact with others, especially people who are sick
  - Don't just walk in, call your health care provider

The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. A facemask should be used by people who have COVID-19 and are showing symptoms to protect others from the risk of infection or if recommended by your healthcare provider.

If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing, the CDC advises you to call your medical provider immediately. IU Health is offering free virtual visits and COVID-19 screenings through their [telemedicine app](#).

In order to sign up for regular updates or emergency alerts provided by Monroe County, please follow this link:

<https://www.co.monroe.in.us/egov/apps/document/center.egov?view=item;id=184>

The Monroe County Health Department's webpage can be found here:

<https://www.co.monroe.in.us/department/?structureid=12>

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STATE OF INDIANA  
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
INDIANAPOLIS

EXECUTIVE ORDER 20-02

FOR: DECLARATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY FOR CORONAVIRUS DISEASE  
2019 OUTBREAK

TO ALL WHOM THESE PRESENTS MAY COME, GREETINGS:

WHEREAS, the novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) is a severe respiratory illness that was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China;

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a rapidly spreading virus that is transmitted from human-to-human and results in symptoms ranging from fever, cough, acute respiratory distress, pneumonia, and even death;

WHEREAS, as of the date of this Executive Order, the COVID-19 outbreak has affected more than 60 countries around the world, including the United States;

WHEREAS, on January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (“WHO”) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a “Public Health Emergency of International Concern”;

WHEREAS, on January 31, 2020, Health and Human Services Secretary, Alex M. Azar II, declared a public health emergency for the United States;

WHEREAS, a vaccine or drug is currently not available for COVID-19;

WHEREAS, in response to the outbreak, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) determined that COVID-19 presents a serious health threat and currently recommends community preparedness and everyday prevention measures be taken by all individuals and families in the United States, including voluntary home isolation when individuals are sick with respiratory symptoms, covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands often, use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers, and routinely cleaning frequently touched surfaces and objects in order to increase community resilience and readiness for responding to an outbreak;

WHEREAS, preparation for public health hazards such as COVID-19 require coordinated efforts across federal, state, county and local governments, first responders, private organizations, and the entire healthcare infrastructure in Indiana;

WHEREAS, the Indiana State Department of Health (“ISDH”) has been actively preparing for the arrival of COVID-19 in our State, including, for example, the following:

- (a) creation of a COVID-19 multi-agency coordination committee;
- (b) hosting of a state-level advisory group;
- (c) activation of a 24/7 call center;
- (d) conducting of a hospital readiness survey;
- (e) daily collaboration with federal, state, and local partners;
- (f) hosting of weekly webinars with local health departments and providers;
- (g) launching of a dedicated webpage in order to share important information;
- (h) planned outreach to community partners;
- (i) working with hospital and healthcare providers across our State to conserve and optimize the use of personal protection equipment; and
- (j) preparation of guidance for schools and universities;

WHEREAS, the Governor has authority and power, under Indiana law, to declare and respond to public health emergencies and is doing so for the entire State of Indiana;

**WHEREAS,** Indiana Code § 10-14-3-1(a) defines disaster as “an occurrence or imminent threat of widespread or severe damage, injury, loss of life or property resulting from any natural phenomenon or human act” including, at (b)(22)(23) respectively, the terms “Epidemic” and “Public Health Emergency”;

**WHEREAS,** Indiana Code § 10-14-3-12(a) provides, in pertinent part, that “[t]he governor shall declare a disaster emergency by executive order or proclamation if the governor determines that a disaster has occurred or that the occurrence or threat of a disaster is imminent”;

**WHEREAS,** Indiana Code § 16-19-3-9 provides that ISDH, which reports to the governor, may “[d]o what is reasonable and necessary for the prevention and suppression of disease”; and

**WHEREAS,** in light of the above, it is necessary and proper to take action to protect the health and well-being of all Hoosiers by taking all necessary and appropriate preparatory and other measures in response to the threats posed to the public health by COVID-19;

**NOW, THEREFORE,** I, Eric J. Holcomb, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Indiana, do hereby:

1. Declare that a public health disaster emergency exists in Indiana attributable to COVID-19.
2. Designate the ISDH as the lead state agency to coordinate emergency response activities among the various state agencies and local governments. The State Health Commissioner (or designee) shall provide the Office of the Governor regular and timely updates of all relevant data and information with respect to the status of and efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19.
3. Order all state and local health officials, law enforcement and emergency response agencies, health care providers, and hospitals, in our State to cooperate with the ISDH in its response to the public health disaster emergency and the implementation of this Executive Order.
4. Order the ISDH to continue following the CDC’s guidelines and protocols in connection with the control the spread of COVID-19, and to further educate the public on prevention.
5. Authorize the ISDH and any other agency of the State of Indiana to seek and accept any funding or other resources from any entity, governmental or private, to treat, control, and stop the spread of COVID-19.
6. Order the ISDH, in coordination with such other agencies as may be necessary, to coordinate services and use the media and other outreach tools as it deems appropriate to inform the public of the risks associated with COVID-19, prevent the spread of the virus, and availability of testing and treatment options.
7. Order all other executive branch agencies, instrumentalities and personnel of the State of Indiana to assist in the execution of this Executive Order, provided however, that no state agency or person acting in the name of any state agency may spend or make any commitment to spend or obligate any funds that are not appropriated for such purposes.

This Executive Order and declaration of a public health disaster emergency in our State shall by law expire thirty (30) days from the date below, unless extended.


It is so ordered.



IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I, Eric J. Holcomb, have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Indiana, on this 6<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2020.

  
Eric J. Holcomb  
Governor of Indiana

ATTEST:

  
Connie Lawson  
Secretary of State