



**Crook County and the City of Prineville**  
**CROOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE**  
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## Media Release - For Immediate Distribution

**Friday, March 13, 2020**

As novel coronavirus – aka COVID-19 – continues to spread, local health officials have stressed that the risk to Central Oregonians remains low. Influenza continues to be a much more active threat to our community this time of year. Crook County does not currently have any positive cases of COVID-19.

Crook County Emergency Management with the support of Crook County Court and the City of Prineville today approved a County Emergency Health Declaration. The local Health Department supports this declaration and recognizes that this will continue to support the county response to this incident. This declaration will support the need for resources whether that is personnel or supplies. It is consistent with the State Health Emergency Declaration and the National Health Emergency the President announced earlier today.

Crook County and the City of Prineville wants you to know that in partnership with our local and neighboring Health Departments, Law Enforcement, school districts, the Central Oregon Emergency Information Network (COEIN), and medical community, which includes St. Charles Health System, the situation is being monitored very closely and following preparedness plans that are in place for any outbreak response. Constant monitoring and tracking for the spread of the virus not only in Oregon but statewide and globally is ongoing.

Crook County Judge, Seth Crawford stated “It is our goal to continue our preparedness efforts and to support our community at the highest possible level. We understand that this is a difficult time for everyone and urge you to stay calm. We hear your concerns and are addressing them”.

The leadership of the county and city respect the privacy of the community members and when there is a positive case announced there will be no release of any identifiable information to protect the patient and family members. With that being said the safety of staff and community members are the highest priority and efforts will continue around releasing updates to the public with the most current information and guidelines available.

The joint city and county preparedness plans outline the process of mitigation, response and recovery for any emergency or disaster.

**Local Public Health and the Oregon Health Authority continue to recommend people in Oregon take everyday precautions to prevent the spread of many respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19 and influenza - The CDC is recommending non-pharmaceutical interventions to slow the spread of COVID-19,**

**and other respiratory infections (including flu and pertussis) by taking everyday preventive actions, including:**

- **If you feel sick, call ahead to your healthcare provider** to discuss whether or not you need to be seen.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue and then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are often touched.
- Take care of your health overall. Staying current on your vaccinations, including flu vaccine, eating well and exercising all help your body stay resilient.
- Consult CDC's travel website for any travel advisories and steps to protect yourself if you plan to travel outside of the US.
- Stay home if you are sick and talk with your employer now about a plan if you do become ill and cannot show up for work.
- It is advised that anyone with compromised immune systems, chronic medical conditions and the elderly not attend large events and practice social distancing to protect yourselves.

This week the state of Oregon announced a ban on gatherings of more than 250 people. The city and county strongly believe in personal freedoms, including the right to assemble, but the statewide ban on large gatherings makes good sense, and needs to be followed.

There is much that is still unknown about the coronavirus, but what is known is that it is in our communities and we will see positive cases at some point. It is recommended that individuals follow the guidelines being offered to help minimize the spread of the virus. The same precautions are suggested for any communicable disease.

For more information or general questions contact:

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Office: 541-447-5165

For media inquiries contact:

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You may also call 211 for general inquiries. The call center is set up to take your calls.