

Dear County Employees,

Though you haven't heard from us directly until now, your health department is very busily working to prepare for novel coronavirus (COVID-19). We are committed to updating you as things progress. I encourage all of you to go to the Health Department page (hd.ingham.org) for up-to-date information as well as the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (michigan.gov/coronavirus) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (cdc.gov). Again, I encourage you to go to these sources for accurate and timely information. Unfortunately, misinformation and unfounded rumors regarding COVID-19 have been spreading.

As the situation unfolds, we currently anticipate it to be very similar to H1N1 in many ways. Your preparedness should resemble that (aka, influenza). I do understand that the numbers of deaths and death rates are scary. We suspect that many cases have gone uncounted in China. That means that the death rate is likely overestimated. Also, most cases and deaths are still in mainland China where they were unprepared for this since it was brand new. I by no means think we should take this situation lightly, but data outside of China suggests to me that we have the ability to effectively protect ourselves and our families.

There is a lot we can do, individually, as organizations and as communities to be ready and to lessen the impact of COVID-19 should it become widespread. We are preparing for it to become widespread. Right now, there are no cases in Michigan. Also, though I stand by all that I told you above, the situation is changing quite rapidly as we continue to learn about this virus. As soon as anything changes, we will be involved, we will be the health department that you have come to rely on, and we will continue to give you the best advice and recommendations we have based on what we know. I've attached a fact sheet for you to read that has more information beyond what I've shared.

Linda Vail
Ingham County Health Officer