Committee: Directly to Council
Committee Review: N/A
Staff: Linda McMillan, Senior Legislative Analyst
Purpose: Receive briefing and have discussion – no vote expected
Keywords: Coronavirus, COVID-19

AGENDA ITEM #13.5
March 3, 2020
Discussion

Montgomery
County Council

SUBJECT

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Public Health Planning (County Council sitting as the Board of Health)

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

Dr. Raymond Crowel, Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
Dr. Travis Gayles, County Health Officer and Chief of DHHS Public Health Services
Earl Stoddard, Director, Office of Emergency management and Homeland Security.

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

- Council sitting at Board of Health to receive update. No known decision points at this time.

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

A new (novel) Coronavirus known as COVID-19 emerged in Wuhan, China in December 2019. The virus causes respiratory illness that can range from mild to severe. The virus can be spread from person to person. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Patients with severe cases may have pneumonia in both lungs. On February 27, 2020, the New York Times reported that COVID-19 was confirmed in at least 48 countries; over 82,700 people had been infected globally; and, at least 2,809 had died, with all but 65 of the deaths in mainland China. As of February 28, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports 15 confirmed cases in the United States (this does not include 47 cases from repatriated persons). As of February 28, 2020 the State of Maryland reported that five (5) patients had been approved for testing; three (3) of those had tests pending at the CDC; two (2) of those had negative tests; and none (0) were laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases.

The CDC recommends the best ways to prevent the spread of the virus include: washing hands for at least 20 seconds, using alcohol-based hand sanitizer, avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands, cover coughs and sneezes, disinfect surfaces, and stay home when you are sick.

SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- The Board of Health will be briefed on the ongoing coordination and collaboration with federal, State, and local agencies and healthcare providers.

This report contains:

M E M O R A N D U M

February 28, 2020

TO: County Council sitting as the Board of Health

FROM: Linda McMillan, Senior Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Public Health Planning

PURPOSE: Update and Discussion

Expected Attendees:
Dr. Raymond Crowel, Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
Dr. Travis Gayles, County Health Officer and Chief, DHHS Public Health Services
Earl Stoddard, Director, Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security

At this session, the HHS Committee will be briefed on general background regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19), efforts to monitor the health impacts of the virus, advice on preventing infection, and local readiness efforts including ongoing planning and coordination with federal, state, and local agencies.

The County website contains information on the Coronavirus. Information changes frequently:

https://montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/RightNav/Coronavirus.html

It starts with the following general information on the virus:

A new Coronavirus emerged in Wuhan, China in December of 2019. At that time, it was reported that many of the cases were linked to a seafood and animal market in Wuhan. On February 11, 2020, the World Health Organization announced an official name for the disease that is causing the 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak, COVID-19. CDC will begin to use this name and has updated its website and other materials to reflect this updated name.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that usually cause mild respiratory illnesses such as the common cold. Some Coronaviruses have caused more severe illness, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). COVID-19 is a new

virus that had not been seen in humans prior to December 2019. Worldwide, there have been more than 1000 deaths reported and thousands of cases identified. All but one death has occurred in China.[1] The first human case in the United States was identified on January 21st in a Washington state resident who had traveled to Wuhan recently. There are currently 14 cases of the virus reported in the United States (as of 2/26/2020). As with any newly emerging infectious disease, information about the disease changes over time. Scientists are currently working to identify the source of the disease, the ways that it spreads and how effectively it can spread from person to person.

A COVID-19 information sheet from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is attached at © 1.

The State of Maryland has extensive information on its Maryland.gov website that includes general information:

https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/Pages/Novel-coronavirus.aspx

As of February 28, 2020, the Maryland website reports:

COVID-19 Testing and Confirmed Case Counts in Maryland
Number of patients approved for COVID-19 testing: 5
Number of COVID-19 tests pending at CDC: 3
Number of negative COVID-19 tests: 2
Number of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases: 0

The Maryland website includes a range of other information such as the periodic updates to local health departments. The following is the link to the February 25, 2020 update that includes global, national, and State information.

https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/IDEHASharedDocuments/Novel%20Coronavirus%20Update%20for%20LHD_2.25.20_FINAL.pdf

The State of Maryland has issued Guidance to schools (K-12) which is attached at © 2-5 and can be found at the following link.

https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/IDEHASharedDocuments/Novel-Coronavirus-FAQ_for-K-12_FINAL.pdf

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has also shared information with parents and guardians on prevention and their continued coordination with DHHS. This information sheet is attached at © 6. There is a link in the MCPS information to the CDC website:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html

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[1] New York Times reports as of 2/27/2020 COVID-19 is confirmed in at least 48 countries. Over 82,700 people have been infected globally and at least 2,809 have died. All but 65 of the deaths are in mainland China.

COVID-19

What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?

COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in China, and limited spread among close contacts has been detected in some countries outside China, including the United States. At this time, however, this virus is NOT currently spreading in communities in the United States. Right now, the greatest risk of infection is for people in China or people who have traveled to China. Risk of infection is dependent on exposure. Close contacts of people who are infected are at greater risk of exposure, for example health care workers and close contacts of people who are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. CDC continues to closely monitor the situation.

Have there been cases of COVID-19 in the U.S.?

Yes. The first case of COVID-19 in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The current count of cases of COVID-19 in the United States is available on CDC's webpage at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but now it seems to be spreading from person to person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some diseases are highly contagious (like measles), while other diseases are less so. At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably the virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading between people. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of
- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

What are severe complications from this virus?

Many patients have pneumonia in both lungs.

How can I help protect myself?

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. These include

- 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. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should

- 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.

What should I do if I recently traveled to China and got sick?

If you were in China within the past 14 days and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, you should seek medical care. Call the office of your health care provider before you go, and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don't go out and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.

CDC

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Frequently Asked Questions:
Guidance for Schools About the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

What is the concern about COVID-19?
There is an ongoing, international outbreak of a new virus, called COVID-19, formerly known as 2019-nCoV. While many of the early cases in this outbreak primarily involved people living in Wuhan City, China, Chinese health officials have now reported thousands of cases throughout China. This virus causes a respiratory illness which includes fever, cough, and shortness of breath, and in some cases, can be fatal. It is thought that infected people will develop symptoms 2 to 14 days after an exposure.

What is being done to address the COVID-19?
On arrival to the United States, travelers from China may be asked questions to determine if they need to undergo health screening. During the health screening, authorities check temperatures, symptoms, and ask about specific exposures in China. If travelers have concerning symptoms, they will be sent for medical evaluation. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) staff will provide health information cards to travelers that tell travelers what symptoms to look out for, and what to do if they develop symptoms within 14 days after leaving China. Some travelers might be asked to stay home from work or school for up to 14 days.

What are the symptoms that COVID-19 can cause?
Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough, and difficulty breathing.

How does the virus spread?
This virus probably originally emerged from an animal source but is now spreading from person-to-person. At this time, it is unclear how this virus is spreading between people; however other coronaviruses spread person-to-person via respiratory droplets created when an infected person coughs or sneezes (similar to how influenza and many other respiratory pathogens spread) and droplets infect another person.

What if a student traveled to China and has no symptoms? Can they come to school?
It depends on when the student was last in China. Students who arrived from China prior to February 4, 2020 and who are well (without symptoms) are not restricted from school or other activities. Because of the wider spread of the virus in China, potential exposures in China are now greater. Therefore, children who arrived from China on February 4 or later should stay home from school until

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it's been 14 days since they left China. After the 14 day period is over, those students are able to return to school with no restrictions on their activities.

What if a student has traveled to China and is sick with fever and respiratory symptoms?
If a student who has traveled in the last 14 days to China, develops fever or respiratory symptoms (especially cough or difficulty breathing), they should stay home from school and be assessed by their primary care provider. If the student does not have a primary care provider, schools should contact the local health department for further guidance.

What if a student has traveled to China and while in school becomes sick with fever and respiratory symptoms?
If a student who has traveled in the last 14 days to China develops fever or respiratory symptoms while at school, the local health department should be notified, and a parent/guardian should pick up the student immediately. The student should wear a surgical mask (if possible) and be placed in a safe isolation area visible to the school nurse or other school health services staff e.g. Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) or school health aide (Certified Nursing Assistant) and separate from the rest of the health room. Ideally this is a private room with the door closed and visibility maintained.

If you become of aware of a student who recently traveled to China and develops fever or respiratory illness, call your local health department and they can assist with determining what additional evaluation is needed. At this time of the year, there are many possible causes for respiratory illness, and it is likely a medical visit for further evaluation (including laboratory testing) will be necessary.

What if a student is sick with fever and respiratory symptoms?
Any student with a fever, even without travel history, should stay home from school until fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications according to the Maryland Communicable Disease Summary. Students reporting to the health room with fever should be asked about recent travel to China.

At this time, residents of Maryland are at low risk of becoming infected with COVID-19, unless they have recently traveled to China or have come in close contact with someone who was ill who recently traveled to China. Even if an ill student has traveled to Wuhan or another area of China, or has had contact with an ill person who has traveled there, their respiratory illness may be due to a variety of other more common causes, including influenza and other common respiratory pathogens.

Students reporting to the health room with fever should be asked about travel to China within the prior 14 days. Any student with a fever, even without travel history, should stay home from school until fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications according to the Maryland Communicable Disease Summary.

General infection control guidance for schools is available on the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology website.

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One of our students is an exchange student from China. Can they return home to China?
Yes. There are no restrictions for students from China to return home.

One of our schools has a school sponsored trip to China. Can they still go?
At this time, no. CDC recommends that travelers avoid non-essential travel to China. The CDC's Travelers' Health webpage should be consulted for current information.

What if we think a student may be at risk for being infected with COVID-19?
If you have concerns that a student might have been exposed to COVID-19 either through travel or some other means, contact your local health department for further guidance.

If we have a student who has been ill at school and is now a person under investigation (PUI), what do we tell the other parents and school staff?
Most people who have fever and respiratory symptoms, including people who were in China within the last 14 days, do not have COVID-19 but other causes for their illness. If a student who has been at school is determined to be a PUI, the local health department will work with schools on all the necessary next steps, including any related communications to parents or school staff. All such communications must be coordinated with the health department.

How can our school prevent infections with COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases?
The best way to prevent infection is to take precautions to avoid exposure to the virus, which are the same precautions you would take to avoid the flu. MDH always recommends everyday actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- 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

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 infection. However, there are vaccines to prevent other common respiratory viruses such as seasonal influenza. Additional information on vaccines can be found at https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/index.html.

Additional information about school communicable disease control, may be found at:
https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/epsdt/healthykids/Documents/Communicable_Diseases_Fact_She et.pdf

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Where can I get more information about COVID-19?
Additional information on COVID-19 outbreak is frequently updated on the CDC website or the Maryland Department of Health website at https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/Pages/Novel-coronavirus.aspx.

Who should I contact if I have more questions about COVID-19?
If your school has additional questions or concerns about COVID-19 or any concerns about student travelers, please contact your local health department.

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential

Dear Parents and Guardians:

MCPS is committed to the health and safety of our students. In the last 48 hours, we've heard from several communities seeking information about the <u>Coronavirus</u>. At this time, there are no reports of Coronavirus in our community. The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has also informed us that to date, no cases have been confirmed in Maryland and there is no reason from a clinical standpoint to be alarmed.

DHHS and the Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security are monitoring the incidence of the Coronavirus in the U.S. Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is monitoring the situation closely in partnership with the World Health Organization. MCPS will continue to consult with DHHS and will provide updates if the situation changes.

As a best practice for overall health in cold and influenza season, the CDC recommends that individuals receive the influenza vaccination and engage in everyday, preventative measures to prevent the spread of germs and avoid illness, such as:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
- Avoid touching eyes, mouth and nose with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with individuals who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick. The CDC recommends that individuals remain home for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever or signs of a fever (i.e., chills, feeling warm, flushed appearance).
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then immediately discard the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Take any anti-viral medication prescribed to you as instructed.

Sincerely,

Montgomery County Public Schools