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1:30pm

Franklin County COVID-19 Emergency Operations Center
Four (4) more Franklin County Health Department Workers Test Positive for Coronavirus, total now stands at six (6).

From:
Scott S. LaVigne, MSW, MBA
Franklin County Health Director
Public Information Officer, Franklin County COVID-19 Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

Communication:
As noted **previously** in our prior communication, on Friday, 4/24/2020, the Franklin County Health Department (FCHD) received positive coronavirus test-results for two (2) employees. Those two (2) employees do **not** serve as healthcare providers within the department. Also as **previously noted**, on Friday 4/24/2020 a total of 48 Health Department staff had samples collected and submitted for coronavirus testing.

As a precaution, the FCHD was disinfected on Saturday, 4/25/2020, and as of this **current** release, the Department is remaining closed for regular business from 4/27/2020 until operations resume on Monday 5/4/2020, at 8:00am.

The Health Department has received the results for all staff tested on Friday 4/24/2020, and those results indicate that **an additional four (4) staff have tested positive**, bringing the current total of Health Department Employees with positive test results to six (6). **None** of the Health Department's now six (6) total positive employees are healthcare providers.

The Franklin County Health Department continues to conduct Contact Tracing for COVID-19, so any individual suspected of being exposed to the coronavirus will be notified by Health Department staff and given specific instructions on what they need to do next.

Out of an abundance of caution, the Health Department is adopting a stringent response to this current situation. As of the date and time of this release, the following Health Department programs will be **closed** from Monday 4/27/2020 until they re-open on Monday, 5/4/2020:

- All clinical services;
- Care Management Services (clients may call their workers for call-back); and
- WIC (clients may call for assistance).

After consultations with NCDHHS, the Health Department has been approved to move forward with the following plan for our **CLINICAL** closures this week:

- Clinic patients provided with the option of receiving some mandated services at our neighboring counties' Health Departments;
- Patients given the option to receive services at other healthcare providers both inside and outside the county.

Patients whose appointments were cancelled are being notified and those appointments will be rescheduled.

Environmental Health services (septic, wells, Food & Lodging inspections, etc.) and the Franklin County Home Health Agency services will **continue** to operate remotely (as they have been doing for some time). Limited drop-off service will be available for Environmental Health needs.

For the week of 4/27/2020 through 5/1/2020, only critical Health Department employees with a negative test and no current symptoms (i.e. with no fever as verified by temperature checks three-times per day) have returned to work to continue the County's Emergency Operations Center and to complete contact investigations . The Health Department will resume all services on Monday, 5/4/2020.

Look for more updates from the Franklin COVID-19 EOC as more information becomes available.

Scott S. LaVigne, MSW, MBA
Franklin County Health Director
Franklin County COVID-19 EOC – Public Information Officer

4/27/2020
Date

Steps We All Need to Take:

Guidance for Those with Fever & Upper Respiratory Symptoms:
If you feel illness coming on, isolate yourself and call you doctor if your symptoms worsen. Everyone with fever and respiratory symptoms should isolate themselves from everyone until BOTH conditions below are met:

- At least 7 days since symptom onset.
  AND
- Over 72 hours after symptom resolution (i.e. absence of fever without the use of fever-reducing medication and improvement of respiratory symptoms).
  Close Contacts:
- Those with close contact to a person with fever or respiratory illness are encouraged to stay home to the extent possible, and to monitor themselves for symptoms.

Recommendations:
What is important is that everyone do their part to keep us all safe:

- avoid touching your face;
- Wash your hands frequently & thoroughly using warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds (sing "Happy Birthday" twice, or use your own tune)
- use hand sanitizers frequently;
- cough/sneeze into your arm, or if you use a tissue, immediately throw it out and wash your hands.
- Isolate yourself from others if you're sick;
- stay home from work/school or going out anywhere if you feel the slightest bit sick.
- Everyone needs to avoid vulnerable populations, including: those over 65; those with underlying health conditions and/or weakened immune systems; and those who are pregnant.
- Do not group together, and certainly not in groups any larger than 10, and keep six (6) feet apart from anyone you don't live with.
- If you have to go out, please maintain at least 6 feet of space between you and others.
- If you have to go out, feel free to use a cloth covering to protect others from **you,** if you happen to have the virus but just aren't showing symptoms yet;
- Don't count on gloves or a cloth mask alone to keep you safe, wash your hands, don't touch your face, and use hand sanitizer if you have it.
- If you are lucky enough to have Personal Protective Equipment (gloves, masks etc.) use it correctly (wearing a pair of gloves everywhere you go means you now have collected everything you've been in contact with, on those gloves.)
- Live by the motto **"If they don't live with you in your house, then they can't come-in, and if you meet them in public, keep them at least 6 feet away."**