



## Umatilla County Public Health

200 SE 3<sup>rd</sup> St., Pendleton, OR 97801

Pendleton: 541-278-5432 Hermiston: 541-567-3113

Fax: 541-278-5433 E-Mail: [Health@umatillacounty.net](mailto:Health@umatillacounty.net)

Website: [www.ucohealth.net](http://www.ucohealth.net)

 [www.facebook.com/umatillacountyhealth](https://www.facebook.com/umatillacountyhealth)



**For Immediate Release:** March 5, 2020

### **Press Release: Umatilla County Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update**

Umatilla County Public Health (UCo Health) recognizes community concern surrounding COVID-19. We are working with multiple health agencies and community partners to disseminate accurate and up-to-date information.

UCo Health reports that we have now received the results back from Washington State Public Health lab on the three samples sent for testing earlier this week from those with close contact with the presumptive positive case. All three test results returned were negative for COVID-19 and as such, no further testing will be conducted on these samples. We are waiting for official confirmation from CDC on the presumptive positive case reported in the press release from the Oregon Health Authority on March 2, but we can report that this individual is recovering.

Due to the nature of the COVID-19 virus, we anticipate that additional samples will be collected for testing. However, UCo Health will only release information in the event that another presumptive positive result is received.

UCo Health is continuing to monitor the COVID-19 situation as it evolves and is checking in daily with those being monitored due to close contact with the presumptive case. Those placed under monitoring or investigation with the UCo Health who receive a negative lab test result will remain under monitoring in accordance with CDC guidelines.

There have been reports of prejudice against people of Asian descent and against members of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, based on unfounded fears that they may be more likely to have the virus. UCo Health would like to remind Umatilla County residents that you are not at increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 based on where you live, recreate or work.

In response to this stigma, UCo Health director Joseph Fiumara stated, “Respiratory viruses like COVID-19 spread when carried through tiny droplets from an infected person to the nose, mouth, or eyes of someone else. From what we know, transmission requires prolonged close contact with an infected individual, so merely being in the same room as someone carrying the virus is not enough. It is imperative to understand that COVID-19 does not target people of any certain race, ethnicity or country of origin, and people should not make assumptions about someone’s health status based on those factors.”

Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and UCo Health continue to recommend all people in Oregon take everyday precautions to prevent the spread of many respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19 and influenza:

- 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.
- Face masks are not recommended for individuals who are **not** sick.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are often touched.
- If you are sick, **please stay home until recovered**.
- 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.

We are asking our Umatilla County residents to please call 211 with your questions regarding COVID-19. If you are exhibiting symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath, call your primary care provider FIRST to discuss the next steps. Do not go to urgent care, doctor's offices or the hospital with these symptoms without calling FIRST. If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911.

We will continue to update our Umatilla County Public Health Facebook page as new information becomes available. Please refer to the Oregon Health Authority and CDC COVID-19 websites for additional information.

**For media inquiries please e-mail: [health@umatillacounty.net](mailto:health@umatillacounty.net)**