Public Health Announces Eighth Positive Case of Coronavirus in Delaware

DOVER (March 15, 2020) – The Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) is announcing the eighth positive case of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The case involves a New Castle County woman over the age of 50. The individual is not severely ill and is currently self-isolated at home. She was exposed to a positive case in another state. Epidemiologists from the Division of Public Health indicated she has minimal close contacts in the state and are working to identify any who were possibly exposed to provide guidance. DPH will not be disclosing additional information about the individual.

With the additional number of test samples that health care systems and providers across the state are submitting to commercial labs, the numbers of patients being tested have increased significantly. To ensure that DPH is reporting the most accurate numbers, going forward the agency will only be releasing the number of positive cases in Delaware, and not the numbers of patients under investigation (PUIs) or the number of persons being monitored. The number of positive cases will be updated on the DPH website de.gov/coronavirus.

Symptoms of COVID-19 are most similar to lower respiratory infections with patients having fever, cough, and shortness of breath. There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19 infection at this time. While in some cases illnesses can be severe and require hospitalization, many individuals infected with COVID-19 recover by resting, drinking plenty of liquids and taking pain, and fever-reducing medications.

Testing for coronavirus disease is not recommended for

individuals who do not have any symptoms of illness. For individuals who have symptoms of illness (fever, cough, or shortness of breath), testing is being run at both the Delaware Public Health Lab as well as commercial labs. Medical providers must collect specimens for testing; specimens are not collected at the DPH Lab or at commercial labs. Medical providers should evaluate patients and rule out other causes of illness first before recommending testing for COVID-19.

While testing for the disease at the Public Health Lab requires DPH approval, providers do not need DPH approval to submit test samples to commercial labs. With commercial lab testing now available, Delaware has enough capacity to accommodate its current testing needs. Providers only need to collect nasal swabs as they would for flu to submit samples for testing. Commercial labs are required to report testing and results to DPH.

Delawareans with questions about COVID-19 or their exposure risk can call the Division of Public Health's Coronavirus Call Center at 1-866-408-1899, or 711 for individuals who are hearing impaired, from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, or email DPHCall@delaware.gov. The DPH Call Center does not have test results. Individuals awaiting test results should wait to hear back from their medical provider. For the latest on Delaware's response, go to de.gov/coronavirus.

DPH will continue to update the public as more information becomes available. For more information, visit de.gov/coronavirus.