COVID-19 Update for March 23, 2020: Public Health Announces 31 Additional Positive Cases

DOVER (March 23, 2020) — The Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) is providing an update on the number of positive cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) reported in the state.

There have been 87 total laboratory-confirmed cases in the state since March 11. This includes 31 additional cases since yesterday. Of the Delawareans diagnosed with COVID-19, 58 are from New Castle County, nine are from Kent County, and 20 are from Sussex County.

Of these cases, 44 are male and 43 are female. The individuals range in age from 1 to 90. Seven individuals are currently hospitalized; three are critically ill. The source of exposure for many of these positive cases is unknown, which indicates community spread of the virus is occurring in the state.

To protect personal health information, DPH will not disclose additional information about the individuals. DPH cannot confirm specific information even if other entities choose to make their own announcements.

"We know this is a startling increase for Delawareans to see," said DHSS Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker, a practicing family physician. " It is an indication of spread that we expected to see, but it is also reflective of the state's increased testing capacity which is leading to more results — both positive and negative. It also shows us why we need Delawareans to stay home and stay safe. We all must end unnecessary contact with others, practice stringent social distancing, go out for essential groceries or prescriptions only as needed, and go to work only if we are in an essential

business. We will get through this, but we must do it together."

Moments ago, Governor John Carney declared a Public Health Emergency in Delaware. The declaration strengthened Delaware's health care workforce by enabling those medical professionals with out-of-state licenses, or who are retired but in good standing, to support Delaware's health care workforce needs. On Sunday, Governor Carney issued the fourth and fifth modifications to his State of Emergency declaration, ordering Delawareans to stay at home whenever possible and closing all non-essential businesses in the state to help stop community spread of COVID-19. The orders go into effect at 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, March 24, 2020.

If you think you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, or have symptoms of illness, make sure to distance yourself from others, particularly vulnerable populations. This includes people 60 years of age and older; people with serious chronic health conditions such as diabetes, lung disease, heart disease; or those who are immunocompromised.

For individuals who are sick, particularly with fever and cough, or shortness of breath, stay home and contact your primary care provider for guidance regarding symptoms and next steps.

As of Monday March 23, 2020, statewide testing at standing health facility testing sites began. These are not walk-in testing sites. A physician's order or prescription is required for testing at one of the standing test sites (* Bayhealth patients will be pre-screened via phone without needing to see a provider first). Those without a primary care provider can call the DPH Call Center Line at 1-888-408-1899. Individuals awaiting test results, should wait to hear back from their medical provider. The DPH Call Center does not have test results.

Approximately 80 percent of individuals infected with COVID-19 recover by resting, drinking plenty of liquids and taking pain and fever-reducing medications. However, illness can be severe and require hospitalization in some cases.

Delawareans with general 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. Questions can also be submitted by email at DPHCall@delaware.gov.

DPH will continue to update the public as more information becomes available. For the latest on Delaware's response, go to de.gov/coronavirus.