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Public Health Officials Announce Fifth Case of Coronavirus Disease in Illinois

Testing Labs in Chicago, Springfield, Carbondale Fully Operational as State Coordinates Robust Response

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Cook County Department of Public Health (CDPH) today announced a fifth Illinois resident has tested positive at the IDPH laboratory for coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The specimens have been sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for confirmatory testing. The fifth individual is a Cook County resident in his 20s who flew into Chicago O'Hare Airport earlier this month after traveling to Italy. The individual acquired the infection while in Italy and is hospitalized at Rush University Medical Center in isolation. Public health officials are identifying and contacting all close contacts.

“The state of Illinois is working around the clock to contain COVID-19 and educate the public,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “Public health officials anticipated there would be additional cases and we will continue to implement robust measures to contain the virus while also preparing for further transmission. The risk of COVID-19 to the general public in Illinois remains low, but we encourage the public to be vigilant and take extra care with the normal precautions you should take during flu season.”

The CDC has confirmed one of the recent presumptive positive cases and we are still awaiting results on the other case. Both remain in home isolation and are doing well. At this time, the exposure route for the third and fourth cases is not known. Both individuals recently traveled to another state, but health officials have not been able to link them to a COVID-19 confirmed case in Illinois or the other state. Therefore, because IDPH has been unable to identify a point of exposure for these two cases, IDPH believes it is possible these cases may be due to community transmission in Illinois.

“While we expect to see additional cases, we are not seeing widespread transmission of the virus in Illinois and we believe the risk to the general public remains low,” said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “We understand people are concerned, but we want to reassure residents that we have been working with local health departments, hospitals, clinicians, the CDC, and other state agencies around the clock and are using every resource at our disposal to prepare.”

Illinois' two previously confirmed cases have both recovered. Public health officials continue to monitor individuals throughout Illinois who have a history of travel to an affected area or who have had close contact with a confirmed case.

"We will continue to monitor all three recently identified cases daily for the presence of fever, cough, or difficulty breathing until CDC criteria for release are met," said Cook County Department of Public Health Chief Operating Officer Dr. Terry Mason. "With the ability to test for COVID-19 in the IDPH laboratories, we were able to get results quickly and potentially limit further spread of this virus."

Illinois was the first state to be able to test for COVID-19 and IDPH continues to test for the virus in all three of its laboratories - Chicago, Springfield, and Carbondale.

The need for testing will be determined by a physician based on the patient's symptoms and epidemiologic factors, which includes health care workers, those who have had close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 patient, or those who have travelled from affected geographic areas. Currently, IDPH is prioritizing testing for individuals who meet previously defined criteria, as well as hospitals who are voluntarily participating in surveillance. When commercial laboratory testing is available, the capacity for more people to be tested will increase significantly.

For information about how you, your school, your workplace, and your community can prepare, please visit [Preventing COVID-19 Spread in Communities](#). For general questions about COVID-19, call the hotline at 1-800-889-3931 or email dph.sick@illinois.gov.

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