



March 31, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Whitehouse, TX) – Smith County and the Northeast Texas Public Health (NET Health) announced that a member of the Whitehouse community has tested positive for 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19). This case marks the first case in the immediate Whitehouse area.

“The situation with COVID-19 outbreak is rapidly changing and spreading,” said Mayor Charles Parker. “It is critical that the community continue to heed the Stay-At-Home Order, social distancing recommendations and take personal hygiene seriously. This will be the key to ensuring that this virus doesn’t spread.” Public health officials will work to isolate the patient, to investigate those that may have had close contact with the patient and notify them of any exposure. Contacts will be asked to stay home away from others for 14 days. The City has not been provided any identifying information about the individual.

Most patients with COVID-19 have mild to moderate symptoms. However, in a small proportion of patients, COVID-19 can lead to more severe illness, including death, particularly among those who are older or those who have chronic medical conditions. Symptoms often include fever, cough and difficulty breathing. Symptoms appear within 14 days of being exposed to an infectious person. COVID-19 spreads primarily through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

How to Protect Yourself and Others

Currently there is no vaccine for COVID-19, so prevention is even more critical. Reducing spread as quickly as possible will help protect our most vulnerable populations, such as seniors and those with chronic medical conditions. You can prevent the spread of coronavirus by taking these steps:

- Comply with the Smith County Stay-At-Home Order.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom. Also wash them before eating and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- If there’s no soap and water, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces you touch often with a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- People who are well do not need to wear masks at home or in public.

This is a rapidly changing situation, and information is being shared as it becomes available from the Northeast Texas Public Health district at <https://www.mynethealth.org/> or by phone at 903-535-0030. Updates from the City of Whitehouse will be provided at <https://www.whitehousetx.org/covid>.