**VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH**

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News Release

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COVID-19 IS WIDESPREAD, PRECAUTIONS PROVIDE THE BEST PROTECTION

(DANVILLE, Virginia) -- The Virginia Department of Health now reports widespread community transmission of COVID-19. This means that COVID-19 is spreading in communities across Virginia, and as additional cases are identified each day, we are reminded that everyone can and should practice personal precautions to help stop the spread.

"All Virginians should stay home and practice social distancing," urges Scott Spillmann, M.D., M.P.H., director, Pittsylvania-Danville Health District. "If you have to go out for critical things like grocery shopping or medical care, stay at least six feet away from others. And wash your hands and surfaces often. These personal precautions apply to all of us, wherever we are"

"Now that COVID-19 is spreading in our communities and cases are confirmed in every health district in Virginia, it is increasingly urgent to practice these precautions," Dr. Spillmann continued. "This is the most effective way to protect yourself, those around you and those that will be around you tomorrow and in the days to come. The risk of exposure to COVID-19 is everywhere, and we should all understand there is no safe place; there is only safe behavior."

Older adults, especially those 65 and older, and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at higher risk for more severe complications from COVID-19. Stay home and avoid close contact with people who are sick. "Even if you're not at high risk for COVID-19, you can do your part to stop the spread by staying home and practicing social distancing," said Dr. Spillmann.

There is growing evidence that people can spread COVID-19 even if they never develop symptoms or before their symptoms start. Even so, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention believes that people are most contagious when they have symptoms. Everyone should limit their exposure by staying home.

Most people with COVID-19 develop mild illness and can isolate at home. The most common symptoms are fever, cough and shortness of breath. Other common symptoms include fatigue, decreased appetite and muscle or body aches. Not everyone with COVID-19 will have all symptoms, and a fever might not be present.

If you are sick with COVID-19 or think you might have COVID-19, stay home, rest and separate yourself from other people in the home as much as possible. Most people will develop mild to moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, that will get better without medical help. By staying home, you reduce the chance of spreading COVID-19 to others, including healthcare workers who are needed to care for the more seriously ill. If you require medical attention, call ahead.

Not every person who has been exposed to COVID-19 needs to be tested. In most instances, a positive test would not change what a doctor tells you to do to get better.

(More)

Avoid public spaces, public activities and group gatherings. If you must use public transportation, such as buses, trains, taxis or ride shares, maintain as much distance as possible from others, avoid touching surfaces and wash your hands when you arrive at your destination (or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.)

Do your part to STOP the spread by taking everyday precautions, including staying at home as much as possible, avoiding close contact with others, covering your coughs and sneezes and cleaning and disinfecting surfaces.

Individuals, communities, businesses and healthcare organizations all play an important role in slowing the spread of COVID-19.

For the most up to date information on COVID-19 in Virginia, visit http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus.

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