

News Release

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STEPHENSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Building a Healthy Community

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First Positive COVID-19 Case in Stephenson County

FREEPORT, Ill., March 22, 2020 — The first case of COVID-19 (the novel coronavirus) has been confirmed in Stephenson County. The patient, a teenager, is quarantined at home. Further public identification is not permitted under federal patient privacy law (HIPAA).

The Stephenson County Health Department and FHN have been expecting a case for some time and have been working diligently to prepare for the arrival of COVID-19 in our community. Current precautions are in place at FHN to reduce the spread of the virus, which is highly contagious, including visitor restrictions at all FHN locations, rescheduling of non-critical treatments/procedures, and internal infection control processes for all staff and providers.

Except in emergency cases, individuals who think they may have COVID-19 or who believe they have been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with or is under evaluation for the disease should **STAY HOME** and **CALL** their healthcare provider or FHN for further direction.

2- FHN COVID-19 Case

Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, and confirmed additional risks such as other health conditions or travel to areas with widespread infections – for more information on symptoms and risk factors, visit www.fhn.org. Do not go to the Emergency Department at FHN Memorial Hospital, FHN/PIC Urgent Care Clinic, or any FHN provider office without calling first and receiving instruction as to how to proceed.

FHN has also implemented a hotline for mobile testing of COVID-19 where callers are screened to determine their risk level and appointments for the testing are scheduled if appropriate. Individuals can NOT be tested at the mobile location without an appointment. The hotline number is 815-599-6412.

At this time, there is no approved treatment or vaccine for COVID-19 so the best course of action is to work as a community to limit its spread. It has been proven that as many as 4 out of 5 cases of COVID-19 are transmitted through a person who has only mild symptoms or no symptoms at all, so it is easy for people to be carriers of the disease to others who are more at risk. As reminders of how to help reduce the spread ...

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; if soap and water, which are preferred, are not available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues, then toss tissues in trash; if you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper arm.
- Avoid touching anywhere on the face as much as possible.
- Practice social distancing; avoid contact with people who are sick (with any disease).
- STAY HOME if you are not feeling well.
- Stay current on orders from your health department and state regarding shelter-in-place or other mandates.

For more information on COVID-19 and FHN responses to the virus, visit IDPH.org or www.fhn.org.

3- FHN COVID-19 Case

FHN

If you are enrolled in FHN's online information portal MyFHN, use the "message" capability to send a message directly to your FHN provider about your symptoms. He or she may ask you to call their office and talk to a nurse.

Anyone, including people who are not FHN patients, can also use FHNNow, FHN's telemedicine service, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Callers do not need to have an FHN provider, and can speak face-to-face with a healthcare provider via videoconference on phones, tablets, or laptop computers. It's fast and easy to sign up – visit www.fhn.org/FHNNow for instructions. (An online visit with FHNNow is \$59: More information is online.)

FHN, a not-for-profit organization with nearly 1,200 employees, is an award-winning regional healthcare system committed to the health and well-being of the people of northwest Illinois and southern Wisconsin. FHN Memorial Hospital has been recognized as one of the state's top hospitals for safety by the Leapfrog group and Healthgrades as well as by the world's largest, completely independent, non-profit product- and service-testing organization. FHN caregivers serve an average of 1,500 people each day across FHN's 19 locations in 5 counties spanning northwest Illinois. Organized in 1995 as an integrated healthcare delivery system, FHN is comprised of FHN Memorial Hospital, the Leonard C. Ferguson Cancer Center at FHN Memorial Hospital, 13 family healthcare centers offering primary and specialty medical care, hospice, and outpatient mental health services. For more information about FHN, please visit www.fhn.org.

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For more information, visit the Stephenson County Health Department website at www.stephensonhealth.com. Like us on Facebook, or, contact us at 815-235-8271. Our hotline is 815-801-4636.

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