



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public Health Officials Report Four Additional COVID-19 Cases in Illinois

CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) are reporting four additional people in Illinois have tested positive at the IDPH laboratory for novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Two of the cases, a woman in her 50s and a woman in her 70s, are both family members to the sixth case, a woman in her 50s who acquired the virus on a cruise ship and is an employee at Jacqueline B. Vaughn Occupational High School.

The third new case is a woman in her 50s from California who traveled to Illinois. The fourth most recent case is a woman in her 70s who returned earlier this month from an Egyptian cruise. All four of these new cases are in isolation and in good condition.

“While we continue to implement measures to reduce the spread of the virus, as we anticipated, we are starting to see more COVID-19 cases in Illinois,” said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “Although these most recent cases are close contacts to a confirmed case or have a history of travel, we want people to prepare for the virus to spread in the community. The virus is not circulating widely in Illinois at this time, but we must prepare now to reduce the impact to our communities if it becomes widespread.”

Public health officials have been working closely with hospitals and health care providers in Illinois to provide guidance on identification of cases, isolation, testing, and infection control practices. IDPH and CDPH have provided guidance to long-term care facilities, schools, universities, businesses, and organizations on how to prepare for wider spread of the virus.

“The City of Chicago continues to work closely with our federal, state, and local partners to respond to this situation and investigate every confirmed case, doing our due diligence to connect with their close contacts,” said Allison Arwady, M.D., Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health. “We expect this to be a long process and we are continually adjusting and updating our response plan to ensure it is responsive to the needs of our communities. We are committed to keeping Chicago’s residents and visitors informed as we go along and we remain confident that the preparations we’ve done for moments like this will serve to protect the health and wellness of our communities.”

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CDPH and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) continue investigating the case at the Jacqueline B. Vaughn Occupational High School, reaching out to all students, faculty and staff, and monitoring the health of everyone who might have been exposed. In addition, testing for COVID-19 has begun on students and staff from the school and so far, no additional positive cases have been identified at the school, although more laboratory tests are pending.

Based on CPDH guidance, CPS has begun a thorough cleaning of Vaughn Occupational and removed the buses that serve Vaughn students for additional cleaning according to CDC-recommended cleaning protocols. In addition, high traffic areas in all schools will also be cleaned, and schools will begin receiving additional cleaning wipes and hand sanitizers beginning Monday.

As a reminder, individuals who have visited Vaughn since Tuesday, February 25 are being asked to stay home unless seeking medical care or given other direction. This applies to all students, staff, and service providers who were in the building since February 25.

Members of the school community and other individuals who were not at Vaughn between February 25 and March 6 do not have restrictions at this time, even if they have been in contact with someone at Vaughn. They can attend work and school, as long as they are not sick.

There are many respiratory viruses that can cause similar symptoms and Illinois continues to see many cases of influenza and other respiratory viruses diagnosed every day. Public health officials want to remind people experiencing flu-like symptoms to stay home unless seeking necessary medical care.

There are also things you can start doing now to prepare yourself and your community, such as determining what you would do if your child's school closed, talking with your employer about sick time or working remotely if possible, and cancelling or postponing large events or religious services.

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. More information and updates on COVID-19 can be found on the [IDPH website](#), the [CDPH website](#), and the [CDC website](#).

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