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Official News Release
For Immediate Release

MORRIS COUNTY GOVERNMENT COORDINATING RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS
RESIDENTS URGED TO AVOID RUMORS AND TAKE BASIC PRECAUTIONS

The Morris County Office of Emergency Management and Office of Health Management, in coordination with officials in all 39 Morris County towns, school districts, and major healthcare providers, are closely monitoring the situation regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19).



Officials across the county are working in concert with the state Department of Health and federal agencies to ensure they have the latest information to best deal with the virus. In particular, county officials are working closely with Atlantic Health and Saint Clare's Health.

The Morris County Board of Freeholders is closely monitoring the situation through regular updates and has authorized county funding for needs related to this issue.

"County government, through OEM and the County Office of Health, is working to provide a unified, countywide response to this situation," said **Freeholder Director Deborah Smith**. "We are coordinating with local health officials and hospitals to ensure they have the information, equipment, supplies, and personnel needed to deal with this situation."

"County residents should be assured that we are taking all necessary steps to be prepared to deal with this virus, if we should encounter it," said **Freeholder Tom Mastrangelo**. "We are ready to support our municipalities and healthcare providers during this time."

- Morris County is working with health and medical professionals to take extra precautions at county government facilities, including the Correctional Facility, Juvenile Detention Center, Youth Shelter, and 9-1-1 Communications Center;
- The Morris County Sheriff's Office is working in partnership with the Morris County OEM to support all operational activities.
- The Morris County Communications (9-1-1) Center has implemented call screening tools for emergency medical calls to identify potential COVID-19 cases at the time of dispatch, so first responders can be aware of relevant information and take appropriate precautions;
- The Morris County OEM will maintain additional levels of response equipment for use by schools or healthcare facilities.
- Morris County OEM's Mobile Ambulance Bus will have added equipment on board capable of assessing large numbers of patients in connection with COVID-19, if needed.
- County OEM is encouraging EMS responders, physicians, and healthcare facilities operators to make early notifications to hospitals, allowing hospitals to be prepared for patient admission prior to arrival.

In addition, county OEM officials urge residents not to be alarmed if they see first responders wearing high levels of protective gear, such as masks, hoods, suits and respirators. Out of an abundance of caution, they may wear this gear for the safety of the patient and fellow responders.

The following are tips provided by the Morris County Office of Health Management (consistent with CDC recommendations) to protect yourself and others from respiratory infections, including the coronavirus (COVID-19):

- Stay home if you are sick;
- Limit close contact with people who are sick;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth;
- Avoid handshakes. Try an elbow bump;
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol;
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces;
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue, use your sleeve (not your hands);

- Get a flu shot to prevent the flu if you have not done so this season.

Residents are asked to avoid rumors and some less-than-accurate reports about this virus. Keep informed by obtaining information from trusted and reliable sources, including the CDC, NJDOH, and their local health departments:

CDC's COVID-19 website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html>

N.J. Department of Health COVID-19 website:
<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>

NJ COVID-19 Information Public Call Center: 1-800-222-1222.

For your local health department, call you town hall or visit your municipal website:
<https://morriscountynj.gov/about/municipalities/>.

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