



GEAUGA PUBLIC HEALTHSM

Promoting and Protecting Community Health

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Press Release

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First positive case of COVID-19 in Geauga County underscores imperative of social distancing

Chardon, Ohio— Geauga Public Health has received its first reported COVID-19 case and strongly urges all residents to adhere to the Governor's orders and to expand upon them voluntarily where possible.

The number of confirmed reported cases of COVID-19 continues to rise sharply in Ohio. As of this moment there is one confirmed reported case in Geauga County. We can assume three things with great confidence:

First, models suggest there are more people in Geauga County who are already infected and contagious but who are experiencing such mild symptoms that they have not sought medical care and have not been tested. Planning is currently underway to increase access to testing.

Second, the number of confirmed cases will increase moving forward. We are on the front end of this public health threat and should expect our routines to change significantly in the months to come.

Third, because there is no vaccine, the only strategies we have at hand to address the pandemic depend on everyone changing their normal behaviors such as practicing social distancing. These strategies are most effective when they are applied preemptively.

In the past few days, the Governor of Ohio has ordered all K-12 schools closed through April 3rd at the earliest, banning gatherings of 100 people excluding religious services until further notice, and the closure of all bars and dine-in options for all restaurants. The Geauga County Health Commissioner strongly supports these measures. Commissioner Quade said, "These strategies will save lives. How many lives will be saved will depend on the degree to which all Ohioans adhere not only to these orders but also the degree to which they are able to generalize the strategies voluntarily to other settings." Quade believes that the Governor has not called for the cancellation of religious services because of the separation of church and state but he cautions that the principles of social distancing apply as much in those settings as they do anywhere else. Finally, Commissioner Quade wants to acknowledge the challenges and sacrifices this new normal will entail but reminds us that we are all working together to save lives.

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