



Communications & Marketing

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: LYNCHBURG ORGANIZATIONS MEET TO DISCUSS COVID-19 RESPONSE

On Tuesday, March 3, the Lynchburg Department of Emergency Services facilitated a planning meeting with the Virginia Department of Health, various City departments and other community partners about the novel coronavirus COVID-19.

The various organizations are collaborating to plan and prepare should cases of the virus be found in the Lynchburg area. According to Dr. Kerry Gateley, Health Director of the Virginia Department of Health, Central Virginia Health District, there have been no confirmed cases of the virus at this point. The Health Department has been assisting a small number of individuals with voluntary self-monitoring.

“Information is changing rapidly,” said Dr. Gateley. “We are receiving additional information around the clock from local, state and federal agencies.” Dr. Gateley cautioned people to not panic and to take the same precautions that they would for the flu.

Remember to take the following precautions recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

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- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.
- CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
- Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

Similar to the flu, COVID-19 is harder on those individuals who already suffer from a weakened immune system or are elderly. Extra precautions should be taken with these individuals. Anyone experiencing symptoms should seek medical assistance from their primary provider and alert them of potential COVID-19 symptoms. Residents are asked **not** to call 911 unless it is an actual emergency.

Information regarding COVID-19 will be updated on a regular basis. Residents are encouraged to use the following websites as reliable sources of information:

Virginia Department of Health

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/novel-coronavirus/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

City of Lynchburg

www.lynchburgva.gov

Partnering Organizations:

Greater Lynchburg Transit Company

Lynchburg City Schools

Centra

Salvation Army

Horizon

American Red Cross

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Blue Ridge EMS Council
Liberty University
University of Lynchburg
Randolph College
Central Virginia Community College
Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance
Virginia Department of Emergency Management
Near Southwest Preparedness Alliance

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Questions regarding COVID-19 should be directed to:

Dr. Kerry Gateley, Health Director
Virginia Department of Health
(434) 477-5900
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Questions regarding the City's emergency response should be directed to:

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