

To: Current & Future Residents, Staff, Business Associates and Guests  
From: Renee Anderson, President & CEO   
RE: COVID-19 / the Corona Virus  
Date: March 10, 2020

The spread of the coronavirus around the world, and more recently in the United States, creates concern and raises questions about how to prepare for and respond to the possibility that the disease will affect Saint John's residents, staff and guests. This concern is exacerbated by the fact that older adults tend to be more vulnerable to communicable diseases, and live in close quarters with others at Saint John's, sharing meals and participating in group functions.

Our multi-faceted approach begins with education. On February 28<sup>th</sup>, residents received an FAQ regarding Coronavirus; the fact sheet remains relevant and is attached to this memo.

Secondly, we are reinforcing preventative measures. Handwashing is the best line of defense against the spread of any respiratory virus. Wash your hands often, especially following contact with other persons or after being in a public place. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Avoid contact with people who are coughing or sneezing. If warm water and soap are not available, use hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer dispensers are located at all entrances to campus as well as entrances to Taylor's and the Bistro. While little is known about how long the virus lives on surfaces, Housekeeping is giving extra attention to door handles, sink faucets, elevator buttons, computer keyboards and handrails. Signs are posted at each entrance requesting guests with cold or flu symptoms or who have recently travelled to one of the countries flagged by the CDC (currently China, Iran, Italy, Japan and South Korea) to refrain from visiting.

Further, we are monitoring all reported illness among residents and staff as we always do especially during flu season. Anyone reporting a fever, along with potential exposure either through travel to or direct contact with a person who has travelled to one of flagged countries, will be sent for testing. Confirmed cases will be quarantined and treated according to symptoms. We are in constant contact with the Milwaukee Health Department and report illness per their requirements. In the event of an outbreak, defined as 3 or more confirmed occurrences, community spaces will be closed and functions curtailed.

Finally, we have reviewed our Pandemic Preparedness Plan to ensure familiarity with protocols relative to supply chain interruption. We have been in communication with our primary food purveyor as well as our medical supply vendor who themselves are preparing to provide emergency response.

If you have any questions regarding COVID-19 or Saint John's response, please contact me ([randerson@saintjohnsmilw.org](mailto:randerson@saintjohnsmilw.org) or 414-831-6880), Mary Milliren, Vice President Health Services ([mmilliren@saintjohnsmilw.org](mailto:mmilliren@saintjohnsmilw.org) or 414-831-6887), or Keshia Exum-Pryor, Director of Human Resources ([kexum-pryor@saintjohnsmilw.org](mailto:kexum-pryor@saintjohnsmilw.org) or 414-831-6720). Thank you.

## **Coronavirus – FAQ** *As of February 28, 2020*

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Saint John's is closely monitoring the worldwide Coronavirus outbreak. Currently, there are no known cases or potential exposures within Saint John's community. We are staying abreast of the situation and wanted to inform you of the precautionary steps that are in place as of today, February 28, 2020.

If you have cold symptoms, have been exposed to a person with cold/flu symptoms, or have recently traveled outside of the United States, we are requesting that you to carefully monitor yourself for any potential symptoms.

- **Residents:** If you believe you have any symptoms, please call the Medical Resource Clinic (831-6887) immediately for guidance. **Do not personally visit the Clinic.**
- **Employee Team Members:** If you are exhibiting any cold/flu symptoms, please contact your supervisor immediately, prior to your next scheduled shift.
- **Family Members:** Please respectfully follow the guidelines below prior to visiting Saint John's, and consider avoiding visiting if you believe you have been in any situation of heightened risk, such as international travel.

Additionally, here are a few important facts to keep in mind in reference to the Coronavirus, reprinted from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

### **What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?**

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

### **Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?**

COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in China, and limited spread among close contacts has been detected in some countries outside China, including the United States. At this time, however, this virus is NOT currently spreading in communities in the United States. Right now, the greatest risk of infection is for people in China or people who have traveled to China. Risk of infection is dependent on exposure. Close contacts of people who are infected are at greater risk of exposure.

Outbreaks of novel virus infections among people are always of public health concern. The fact that this disease has caused illness, including illness resulting in death, a sustained person-to-person spread is concerning. These factors meet two of the criteria of a pandemic. As community spread is detected in more and more countries, the world moves closer toward meeting the third criteria, worldwide spread of the new virus. The potential public health threat posed by COVID-19 is high, both globally and to the United States. For the general American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low.

### **Have there been cases of COVID-19 in the U.S.?**

Yes. The first case of COVID-19 in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The current count of cases of COVID-19 in the United States is available on CDC's webpage at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>

### **How does COVID-19 spread?**

The virus that causes COVID-19 likely emerged from an animal source, but now it seems to be spreading from person to person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some diseases are highly contagious (like measles), while other diseases are less so. At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably the virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading between people.

### **What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**

It is believed the incubation period following exposure is about 5 days, but some studies suggest it could be up to 14 days. Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath
- muscle pain/fatigue

Sore throat, cough with sputum production, headache, and diarrhea have also been reported. There have been confirmed cases of this disease where the patient was not symptomatic.

### **How can I help protect myself?**

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19. The CDC is recommending US citizens do not travel to certain countries based on the prevalence rates in those countries, presently China, Japan, and Italy. Individuals traveling to countries with high prevalence rates may need to be quarantined upon their return home (this is happening with visits to China).

### **There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses:**

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

### **If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should**

- 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.

### **Is there a vaccine?**

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

### **Is there a treatment?**

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms

Saint John's is monitoring the situation as it evolves and updating our infectious disease plan as needed. We have supplies on hand and have procured additional supplies as necessary to help protect our community.

Additional communications will be sent should an update be needed. If you have any questions, please call Mary Milliren, Vice President of Health Services at 831-6887.