

AN UPDATE FROM CINDY AXNE

03/09/20

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Friends,

I want to make sure you have the best available information to protect and care for yourself and your loved ones as we learn more about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

On Sunday, March 8th, the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) confirmed the first three 'presumptive positive' cases of coronavirus in Iowa. It is more important than ever that Iowa families and communities take the necessary steps to avoid further spread of this disease.

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) considers this novel coronavirus outbreak to be a serious public health threat, and it is important that you are aware of the disease and the efforts necessary to prevent its spread.

Read below or [visit my website](#) to learn more about COVID-19, or you can find additional information through the [CDC](#), the [IDPH](#), or by calling Iowa's coronavirus hotline by dialing 2-1-1.

What are the Symptoms of COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Symptoms can include fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

What are the Best Strategies for Preventing Infection?



The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19. There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- 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 except to get medical care
- Call ahead before visiting your doctor
- Wear a facemask
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Avoid sharing personal household items
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- 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.

Is It Still Safe to Travel?

CDC recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to China, South Korea, and Italy. CDC also advises that older adults and those with chronic medical conditions consider postponing nonessential travel to Iran and Japan. Travelers should practice usual precautions when traveling to Hong Kong.

If you plan to travel internationally, I encourage you to enroll in the [State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) to receive important messages, alerts, updates, and travel advisories while you are there.

Beware of Coronavirus-Related Scams!

Scammers are taking advantage of fears surrounding the coronavirus. They're setting up websites to sell bogus products and using fake emails, texts, and social media posts as a ruse to take your money and get your personal information. The emails and posts may be promoting awareness and prevention tips, and fake information about cases in your neighborhood.

Here are some tips to help you keep the scammers at bay:

- [Don't click on links from sources you don't know.](#) It could download a virus onto your computer or device.
- Watch for emails claiming to be from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or experts saying that have information about the virus. For the most up-to-date information about the coronavirus, visit the [CDC's website](#).
- Ignore online offers for vaccinations. If you see ads touting prevention, treatment, or cure claims for the coronavirus, ask yourself: if there's been a medical breakthrough, would you be hearing about it for the first time through an ad or sales pitch?

- Don't let anyone rush you into making a donation. If someone wants donations in cash, by gift card, or by wiring money, don't do it.
- Be alert to "investment opportunities." The [U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission \(SEC\)](#) is warning people about online promotions, including on social media, claiming that the products or services of publicly-traded companies can prevent, detect, or cure coronavirus and that the stock of these companies will dramatically increase in value as a result.

What is Congress Doing?

Last week, Congress passed a \$8.3 billion funding package to help reinforce federal, state, and local efforts to combat all outbreaks of COVID-19 in the United States.

The legislation, which I supported along with an overwhelming bipartisan majority in the House, allocates billions of dollars to support public health prevention and response efforts, the development of improved testing and treatment, and unimpeded access to critical medical supplies.

Learn more [here](#).

Further Information

Experts have been working hard to understand this new strain of coronavirus. Because new information is coming out every day, please visit the sites below to stay up to date.

[The CDC provides updates](#) on the virus and safety information for the public and healthcare professionals. You can find answers to frequently asked questions about COVID-19 [here](#).

[The Iowa Department of Public Health](#) provides updates on the disease's impact Iowa.

[The State Department](#) provides a list of travel advisories for those who are planning to fly outside of the United States.

I will continue to communicate with the CDC, the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) and local public health officials — and will share any updates with you via email and on my social media accounts.

Thank you,

Cindy