



Greene County Public Health

Melissa Howell MS, MBA, MPH, RN, RS, Health Commissioner
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Press Release

For Immediate Release
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First Case of COVID-19 Confirmed in Greene County

GREENE COUNTY, OH – Greene County Public Health (GCPH) has announced the first case of COVID-19 in the county. Wright Patterson Air Force Base (WPAFB), along with the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), confirmed the results the evening of March 21, at which point officials at Greene County Public Health were notified.

The person and identified contacts have self-isolated at home and monitoring is being done by Greene County Public Health. To protect the identities of the case and contacts, no additional information is being released. There was no history of exposure through travel, which indicates this person became ill through community spread.

COVID-19 has had a global effect, individuals and families are focusing on life/safety, and it is impacting the social, psychological and economic fabric of our community. One Greene County resident stated they understand the need “to sacrifice for some time for the greater good.” Health Commissioner Melissa Howell added “This is a marathon and a long haul. Continue to comply with social distancing. Many people may be hospitalized, and our numbers will increase. Our community has demonstrated great resilience and we need the same resolve from all sectors of the community to bring this to an end. The public health workers are the intelligence officers needed to guide strategies and explain policies as they are adopted. It is going to be difficult to adapt to this new paradigm. Public health workers, which include disease investigators, nurses, physicians, sanitarians, and health educators are critical for identifying and responding to episodic outbreaks as the disease spreads in the community. Tracking systems help find cases and monitor the spread of disease. Public health pays attention to abnormal information that could signal an outbreak, responds and mobilizes the community.”

Elongating the curve through social distancing will help the healthcare system keep hospital beds and ventilators available for severely ill people, medical supplies on hand, oxygen available, and assures healthcare workers can provide care safely. Many residents have reached out to providers because they want to be tested but we are in choppy water with limited resources for testing at this time. To provide the best care in Greene County, we cannot exhaust our ability to provide supportive care for the people who will become severely ill. Now is the time for everyone to fully understand the importance of social distancing so that the healthcare system does not become overwhelmed. It is also important to understand there is a need to provide ongoing necessary medical care to people with hypertension, diabetes or other chronic health conditions and that medical supplies and medication must continue to be available for those people.

Dr. Kevin Sharrett, Medical Director for Greene County Public Health, reminds all residents that “individuals with mild symptoms should self-isolate because they will likely recover and have a positive outcome. If symptoms worsen, contact your healthcare provider.”

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The coronavirus has many people feeling distressed. This is very normal in times of crisis. Greta Mayer, CEO of the Mental Health and Recovery Board of Clark, Greene and Madison Counties, along with Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services, has offered some tips for managing stress during the pandemic:

1. **Get information from a trusted resource:** coronavirus.ohio.gov. This website is updated regularly by the ODH in coordination with the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). It has the facts on what is happening in Ohio and helpful resources on prevention and testing for you and your family.
2. **If you have specific questions, ask an expert** at 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634). This call center is managed by the ODH and is now open 7 days a week from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
3. **Limit media exposure.** Today's 24-hour news cycle can make it difficult to turn away from the TV, radio, or social media, but research has shown that excess media exposure to coverage of stressful events can result in negative mental health outcomes. Use trusted media outlets to gather the information you need, then turn them off.
4. **Reduce your stress and feel better:**
 - a. **Be prepared.** Prevent risk of illness by taking simple steps that are good practices: Wash your hands. Cover your cough. Increase cleaning. Stay home if you're sick.
 - b. **Eat healthy foods and exercise** to boost your immune system
 - c. **Get plenty of rest.**
 - d. **Stay in touch with friends and loved ones** and talk with them about your worries
 - e. **Keep participating in hobbies and activities that you enjoy** to improve your mood.
5. **Recognize signs of distress in yourself and family or friends.** Signs of stress include worry, fear, sleeping or eating too little or too much, difficulty concentrating, pulling away from people or things at home or work or in daily life, yelling or fighting with family or friends, having thoughts or memories you can't get out of your head, unexplained aches and pains, feeling hopeless or helpless, thinking of hurting yourself or someone else, and smoking or drinking alcohol more than you should.
6. **Get help for your stress if you need it** by calling the national Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990. Or text "TalkWithUs" to 66746.

All Greene County residents are urged to please follow the guidance and orders of ODH and Governor Mike DeWine regarding staying at home, practicing social distancing when you must be out, and good hand hygiene.

Should you need further information, please call our office at 937-374-5600. For details on COVID-19, please visit coronavirus.ohio.gov or [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov). You can also call the Ohio Department of Health's COVID-19 Call Center at 1-833-4-ASK-ODH which is open 7 days per week from 9:00am – 8:00pm.

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