Talking points on COIVD-19

Why the increase in numbers? Many things are leading to an increase in cases:

- Businesses are opening up and people are social distancing less
- Cases are increasing due to community spread
- There are now more tests available and more people are getting tested
  - As more information is shared in the community, more people are recognizing their symptoms and getting tested, whereas before, they would have just managed their symptoms at home.
  - MDH changed the recommendations for who should get tested to anyone who is symptomatic
  - If you attended a protest, testing is recommended, even if you do not have symptoms

Are there hotspots?

- The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) doesn't have an actual definition of a hotspot. They do however monitor businesses and if they have 3 or more positive cases in the same location on the same day, they have Local Public Health reach out to that business to see if they need assistance with implementing additional practices to slow the spread. In most cases SWHHS's has already been working with that business. We will not share specific details regarding clusters in businesses.
- We don't want people to think that this virus is only spreading among certain populations. There are people of all ages, race, gender and socioeconomic status who have tested positive.
- There are many people who do not test positive, but could be carrying the virus.
- There are many people who do not have symptoms or very mild symptoms, so they do not get tested and could be COVID positive.
- Elderly people and people with underlying conditions are at a higher risk for severe symptoms and should take extra precautions

How many people are recovered?

- We have had many questions and comments about not reporting "recovered" cases regarding COVID in our six counties. We want to give the community the most accurate and educational information that we can. Because there are many levels or definitions of recovered and data is incomplete, we are not providing information regarding "recovery status".
- Many people who have tested positive to COVID-19 had mild symptoms that did not even need medical treatment. Others, with more severe symptoms have fully recovered and have returned to their baseline health. Others yet, have had severe and long-lasting symptoms

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(fatigue, body pain, and inability to breathe properly) that are affecting their health for months after their diagnosis.

- This virus is new. We have much to learn about it and the long-term impact is still unknown.

How does reporting work?

- COVID positive cases are reported in the county that the patient identifies as their county of residence

What does exposure mean?

- MDH has updated their guidelines regarding possible covid-19 exposure to being within 6ft of an individual who is positive for 15 minutes or more. So, if you test positive, MDH will call you and ask many questions, including asking you to identify those who you've had contact with that meets that definition. They will ask you to think back to at least 2 days before you starting having symptoms.

Data Privacy and protecting people's rights:

- SWHHS will not release any identifying information about COVID cases.

Other considerations:

- The virus remains highly contagious. If you are experiencing symptoms, please self-isolate immediately and call your healthcare provider to get tested. Everyone in your household should also isolate. Your healthcare provider will give you more information.
- The information regarding Coronavirus is evolving. What started out as an ordinary respiratory disease now affects many other systems in the body, including the heart and blood vessels. We are also learning more about the impact on some children.
- Please continue to protect yourself and others by following the recommended guidelines:
    - Wear a mask in public
    - Avoid enclosed spaces with groups of people
    - Get tested if you have symptoms
    - Stay 6 feet away from others
    - Cover your cough and sneeze
    - Wash your hands with soap and water frequently
    - Avoid touching your face
    - Stay home and isolate if you are sick and call your provider if you need medical advice or a COVID test

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