Today the CORE 4 partners of Jackson County, Missouri; Johnson County, Kansas; Kansas City, Missouri, and the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas met and have recognized that coronavirus is circulating in the Kansas City area. “Pandemics have a life cycle, and local transmission is an anticipated occurrence,” said Dr. Joseph LeMaster, Johnson County’s public health officer.

Yesterday, these four jurisdictions agreed to implement measures to close restaurants, bars, taverns, clubs and movie theaters in their jurisdictions for 15 days. All four jurisdictions have also decided to ban public gatherings of more than 10 people effective March 16.

“It is important that the people of Jackson County, and others across the region, understand that the coronavirus is in our community,” said Jackson County Executive Frank White. “While the metro area may be divided by city, county, and state lines, the spread of COVID-19 will not be deterred by them. We must respond to this disease as a region and take the necessary steps to slow its spread and protect our neighbors regardless of where they call home.”

Please do not visit the emergency rooms for mild illness. Anyone with mild symptoms (fever, cough) should isolate at home and away from family members for at least seven days after symptoms started or for 72 hours after symptoms are gone. Anyone with more severe symptoms (shortness of breath along with fever/cough) should call their healthcare provider. Individuals who have mild symptoms should not expect to be tested at this time.

Testing needs to be prioritized to the sickest patients who are seriously ill and require admission to the hospital. Excessive testing of patients with minor symptoms may put too much strain on laboratories and hospital resources. Since there is no treatment currently for COVID-19 (unless critically ill requiring hospitalization) testing patients with mild illness needs to be a lower priority.

It is important for all residents to recognize their role in preventing the spread of this disease. Science tells us that individuals can spread this disease before they develop symptoms. Limiting the number of interactions with other people will result in a decrease in the transmission of coronavirus.

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