FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 17, 2020


The Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, confirmed two new cases of COVID-19, also known as the novel coronavirus, on Tuesday, March 17. This brings the total number of positive cases Wyandotte has had to three. This follows the first case in the county, a man in his 70s who passed away on March 11 and was confirmed positive for COVID-19 on March 12.

The new cases include two Wyandotte residents: one female in her 40s and one female in her 50s. Both patients were admitted to separate local hospitals, where medical providers in each hospital determined their patient should be tested for COVID-19, in consultation with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). KDHE confirmed the positive test results late Monday evening. Both patients have since been released and are self-isolating at home in accordance with CDC guidelines.

“We are relieved that both patients are well enough to have been released from the hospital and wish them each a speedy recovery,” said Mayor Alvey of the Unified Government. “The Unified Government Public Health Department serving Wyandotte County will continue to conduct a contact investigation in these cases. This is a process where we retrace the patient’s steps and activities so that we can identify anyone who may have been potentially exposed to COVID-19.”

Mayor Alvey also noted how these new cases underscore the importance of strong public health measures, including the bar and restaurant ban announced on March 16. “Two more cases are indicative of why the bar and restaurant ban is an important proactive step to limiting the transmission of COVID-19 and preventing an overload of our local health system,” said Alvey. The bar and restaurant ban was put in place in partnership with Jackson County, Johnson County, and Kansas City, Missouri.

Additionally, Unified Government officials and Public Health Department experts encourage all community members to take steps of their own to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

These measures include:

- Avoid large gatherings
- Practice social distancing by avoiding being closer than 6 feet to others
- If you’re sick, stay home
- If you have symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath), call ahead before seeing your health care provider, and stay home until you receive additional instructions from his or her office
- If you think you may need to be tested for COVID-19, call your health care provider, who will evaluate your symptoms and other factors that could indicate COVID-19 (e.g. travel history) to determine if testing is right for you
- Practice good hygiene, including washing hands frequently, and avoid touching your nose, eyes or mouth with unwashed hands at all times
• Cover coughs with a tissue or your sleeve

“Our objective in asking the public to follow these recommendations and learn more about the virus is to contain the spread of the virus and give our residents the information they need to minimize their exposure to it,” said Garrison. “Seeing additional cases of COVID-19 in our county is a call to action for all of us. It’s up to our community as a whole to reduce the spread and protect those most vulnerable to serious illness, including older adults and people with chronic health conditions.”

If you or a loved one are at higher risk for serious illness, follow the latest CDC guidelines for people at higher risk. These include:

• Having adequate medications, food, and household supplies on hand
• Avoid crowds
• Planning ahead for what to do if a usual caregiver is sick
• Note: Wearing masks in public is NOT recommended for those who are trying to avoid infection

“Our community in Wyandotte County is incredibly resilient,” said Alvey. “We have faced public health challenges before and overcome them, just as we will now. The Unified Government will continue to update our residents through our website and social media on the latest COVID-19 information.”

Resources provided by the Unified Government include:

• WYCOCKCK.ORG/COVID-19: This website contains UG news releases on COVID-19 and a list of resources to learn more
• The Wyandotte County Help Line is available to residents at 3-1-1 for those with questions about COVID-19.

In addition, the KDHE has also set up a hotline at 866-534-3463.

Please note: in the future, new cases will not be noted via media release, but instead will be included in regular case count updates to the Unified Government’s COVID-19 webpage: WYCOCKCK.ORG/COVID-19

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