

Coronavirus: health officials recommend prevention and preparedness

Staff Report

Stay up to date on COVID-19 health related news from the Mississippi State Department of Health at https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/14,0,420.html#public

COVID-19 is a new respiratory virus first identified in Wuhan, China that causes flu-like illness ranging from mild to severe, with symptoms of fever, coughing, fatigue and difficulty breathing. Like the flu, COVID-19 it is thought to be spread person-to-person by close contact (within 6 feet) and by coughing or sneezing. Other possible routes of transmission, such as touching surfaces contaminated by the virus, are also being investigated.

Cases of COVID-19 continue to be identified in U.S. states, and in many areas person-to-person transmission has occurred. This is a rapidly changing situation that is continually being monitored by the CDC and MSDH as more cases in the U.S. are expected.

Mississippians are advised to take health precautions to prevent the possible transmission of disease, and stay in touch for the latest information on the situation in the state evolves.

COVID-19 Testing

The MSDH Public Health Laboratory is testing samples submitted by Mississippi physicians and healthcare providers around the state in cases where COVID-19 is determined to be a risk. Anyone with flu-like symptoms of fever, severe cough or severe chest pains – especially those who are older or in poor health – should call their doctor or healthcare provider for instructions on safely being examined. Healthcare providers can assess your health history

State superintendent provides recommendation regarding statewide assessments and accountability

Press Release

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) is providing this update on the impact of school closures due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

“This is an unprecedented time in our state and country, and the safety, health and well-being of students, school staff and communities are the MDE’s and the Mississippi State Board of Education’s (SBE) top priorities,” said Dr. Carey Wright, state superintendent of edu-

cation. Dr. Wright has made a recommendation to the SBE that state and federal assessment and accountability requirements be suspended for the 2019-20 school year.

Prevention and Preparedness for Individuals

Protect yourself and others with these steps:

- Stay home if you are sick, and avoid close contact with anyone who is ill.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes. When possible, cough, sneeze or blow your nose into a tissue, and throw the tissue away.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, especially after coughing or sneezing, blowing your nose, and using the bathroom. Effective handwashing takes about 20 seconds, and includes cleaning under fingernails, between fingers, and washing the back of hands as well as the front. More proper handwashing tips »
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are touched often.
- Stay in good overall health by eating right and staying active. If you are living with diabetes, heart disease or other condition, keep in touch with your doctor and stay current with your treatment.
- During or before flu season, get a flu shot. Flu vaccination can prevent the flu or make it less severe, and decrease your chance of hospitalization and death. It also keeps you healthier and better able to fight off infections.

and symptoms, and perform testing for COVID-19 as needed.

• If you are sick, especially with shortness of breath, cough, fever or similar flu-like symptoms, call a doctor or healthcare provider.

New recommendations as of March 16, 2020

- Avoid social gatherings where 10 people or more would come into close contact. This does not apply to

schools or businesses, which should make their own decisions to limit activities or attendance.

- To prevent illness in those most vulnerable, anyone 65 or older OR with a chronic medical condition should avoid all social gatherings.
- Avoid unnecessary (non-urgent) air, bus or train travel.

- Limit visitation to older relatives or friends (especially in nursing or care homes).
- Prepare for the possibility that schools or day care centers may temporarily close.

For People at High Risk

People at risk for serious illness from COVID-19 are older adults and those with a chronic illness such as heart disease, diabetes, or lung disease. These people should take simple precautions at all times to limit their exposure to others who may be ill:

- Avoid social gatherings.
- Keep more space (6 feet if possible) between you and others as you go through the day.
- Avoid crowds. When you do go out in public, keep away from others who are sick and limit close contact.
- Wash your hands often, especially after being in public places.
- If COVID-19 begins to spread locally, you should stay home as much as possible. Having a supply of important medications and basic supplies can help.

Full recommendations from the CDC for people at high risk For Long-Term Care Facilities

- MSDH recommends discontinuing group social activities.
- Consider restricting visitation until further notice.
- Post signs that discourage all nonessential visitation and discourage ill visitors from entering the facility.

Dobbs, State Health Officer with the Mississippi Department of Health, as

the pandemic evolves. Should schools statewide need to close for an extended period of time, Dr. Wright will recommend that the SBE waive applicable policies regarding attendance, promotion and graduation.

The SBE is scheduled to meet virtually at 10 a.m. March 19. The public is asked to view the meeting

- Visitors should only visit their family members and should not have contact with other residents since they could spread the virus.
- Visitors should cover their coughs and be educated on the importance of hand hygiene.

- Keep all ill visitors away from the facility for at least 48 hours after symptoms resolve.
- Consider limiting visitation by children (especially during community wide outbreaks) and the elderly or those with underlying medical problems that place them at risk.

- Postpone all groups (like school groups or church groups) from visiting facility — this goes along with discontinuing all group activities.
- Make sure the facility has plenty of hand washing products and that visitors have access to them.

Schools, Gatherings and Events

Everyone attending mass gatherings should take extra precautions at this time, including:

- Maintain social distancing as much as practical. A separation of 6 feet from another person is considered effective for infection control.
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly soap and water, or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Look for sanitizers with at least 60 percent alcohol.
- If ill, do not attend any public event and call your physician or healthcare provider if needed.
- Schools throughout the state should consider canceling any mass gatherings, including assembly and social events.
- The Mississippi State Department of Health is not advising the closing of schools at this time.

Event organizers: MSDH recommends that communities and organizations contact us at 877-978-6453 to determine whether cancellation is warranted, or appropriate preventive steps for your event.

The MDE is working with the Mississippi State Legislature to address the issue of pay during an extended closure for certified and non-certified school employees.

Further updates will be provided in the future.

State and federal assessments included in this recommendation include:

- Pre-K and Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (post-

DURANT NEWS

by Rowena Hill

Many good friends of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Crowder are thankful they have adjusted to the convalescent home in the Jackson area but the people in town really miss seeing and being together with them. Hope they will be feeling better and back at home real soon.

Mr. Eddy Johnson recently moved to the Jackson area. He is highly missed by those of the community and town.

The Baptist church congregation welcomed Mrs. Lorraine Burrell to the Sunday evening service last Sunday. Hope it will become a habit. Brother Ed is such a great preacher and pastor.

All are thankful Mrs. Cynthia Bratcher is feeling better after a recent accident at her home.

Lamar Land spent time during the week at home with his mother, Mrs. Betty (Mitch) Land. We sure miss being with Lamar, but are glad he is working for the Lord at a church.

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. David Cain. He recently returned from his job and will now be a full time pastor at the First United Methodist Church.

Robert Randle is still in the Baptist hospital in Jackson. Two of his sisters went to visit him last Thursday. The other two were planning to go see him Friday. His sister Mae Alice Riley was missing from the Senior Citizen Feeding Site in Lexington for a few days. She has leg problems and was at home resting. She came back to the site last Thursday. She gets around on a cane. I do too sometimes.

Eula Lee Wade McGee was funeralized Saturday, March 14.

The seniors at the Senior Citizens Feeding Site had their monthly combined birthday party last Thursday. Those having a birthday were Elder Curtis Cobbins, Mr. Arthur Runnels, Mrs. Thelma Washington and Mrs. Austry Kirklin. Mrs. Rosie Neal has started attending the feeding program at the Multi-Purpose building in Lexington.

The Plannign Session and Joint Board Meeting for the Rose Hill District Association

met Saturday morning, March 7. We had an enjoyable time taking care of business and making out the 2020 program. We are asking the churches that have not been attending to please start attending. The lax churches have not been suspended. We pray that God will encourage you to come back to the association. For information on the association, please contact Rev. Dan March, Rev. Leroy Gibson, Mrs. Gladys Cox, Mrs. Leona Fields or Mrs. Nusha Lacy. You can also contact Rev. Otis Anthony, Rev. John Jackson, Mrs. Rosa Ceal Dixon, Mrs. Lillie Southern or Mrs. Shirley March.

Mr. Arthur Runnels, one of the Valley bus drivers says “thank you” to all the people that donated clothes for him to take to the people that were displaced by water in Tchula.

The road is still closed up Highway 17 where Highway 430 at Blackhawk crosses.

Prayers and best wishes go out to Mrs. Betty Williamson. She hasn’t been well for some time and she is missed.

We, the First Baptist congregation, are very thankful to have Rev. and Mrs. Ed McDaniel for our interim pastor for Sunday services and Wednesday prayer meetings. They are very dear to our church and community.

All are thankful Mrs. Shirley McCrory is back in church at First Baptist and look forward to her feeling great. It is good to see her out again.

Mrs. Shirley Higginbotham and son Jay of Clinton spent time last week with me, Mark, Joey and Jackie. Jay is to stay for (and is) a longer visit. She will return for him later in the week.

He is precious to me, my first grandchild, Shirley also.

We sure miss seeing and being with Mr. and Mrs. Dale McBride and family, especially at church and Sunday School at First Baptist. We need and want to see and be together again. All look forward to spending time with all our former members and/or regular visitors



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- Dr. Carey Wright, state superintendent of education.