



Caddo County Health Department

For Immediate Release

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Health Officials Update Travel Advisories for COVID-19

In effort to update the public on the evolving global outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) is advising the public of new travel advisories issued due to community spread of the virus in Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Iran and Italy.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is recommending travelers avoid all nonessential travel to China and South Korea. Additionally, they issued an alert advising older adults and those with chronic medical conditions to consider postponing nonessential travel to Japan, Iran and Italy. The CDC also recommends all travelers reconsider cruise ship voyages to or within Asia.

OSDH State Epidemiologist Laurence Burnsed said it's important for the public to monitor travel advisories, especially if traveling internationally. "As public health officials, our goal is to reduce the risk of contracting the virus and returning to the United States after traveling to a destination where the virus is being spread from person-to-person," said Burnsed. "The immediate health risk to the general American public is still low."

As the global outbreak continues to evolve, travelers should consider travel insurance in the event their international destination becomes an area with community spread of the virus. At this time, the CDC does not recommend canceling travel to Hong Kong. However, travelers should practice the usual precautions of washing hands frequently, avoiding people who are sick and avoiding touching their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

There are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Oklahoma. The OSDH continues to work with local, county, state and federal partners to monitor travelers who return to Oklahoma from China. Travelers are contacted by health officials and monitored daily for 14 days following their departure from China.

At this time, there is no vaccine and no cure for the virus. Commissioner of Health Gary Cox said officials are actively working health care providers, medical facilities, hospitals and other relevant partners to prepare them for assessment, testing and treatment of a patient who is showing signs and symptoms after travel to an affected area.

If the United States experiences high rates of community spread, non-pharmaceutical interventions such as avoiding social interaction at school and work will be the best way to prevent spread of the virus. These interventions have the potential to disrupt daily activities for schools, businesses and families. It is important for families and organizations to begin preparedness efforts such as considering sick leave and implementing capabilities for distance learning and telework.

As the COVID-19 situation evolves, the countries impacted are likely to change. To monitor travel advisories and other updates associated with COVID-19 visit <https://www.ok.gov/health/index.html>. Additional information can be obtained by calling the Caddo County Health Department at 405-247-2507.

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