



# COUNTY OF HENRY

## OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND SAFETY

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## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE- 29 March 2020

(Paris, TN) Yesterday, Henry County and City of Paris officials were notified by the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) that a resident of Henry County has tested positive for the novel coronavirus. This is the county's first confirmed case. The Dept of Health has contacted the patient, who has remained in quarantine, and is recovering with no complications. Additionally, Henry County Medical Center released information confirming a patient is being treated here and has been diagnosed with COVID-19. This patient is not a resident of Henry County.

This was not unexpected. Henry County and City of Paris officials have been preparing for and expecting a positive case for weeks. We are coordinating with the TDH and the health care community partners to make sure all residents of Henry County continue to protect their health.

Henry County Mayor, Brent Greer, states, "This threat continues to impact our community and with yesterday's announcements, it is important to remain vigilant to Coronavirus symptoms and call your health care provider as soon as possible. We all have to work together to stop the spread whenever possible. I applaud our local businesses who are following Governor Bill Lee's Executive Order #17 issued on March 19. We realize all local businesses are facing challenges during this unprecedented event. It is our intent to continue to follow the executive orders of the Governor while trying to limit the negative economic impact on our community as much as possible."

Henry County Emergency Management Director, Ron Watkins, said, "The case total for Tennessee now stands at 1,373. The peak of spread may not be for several weeks. We will continue to closely monitor this evolving situation and will adapt our response as appropriate. We are in constant contact with Governor Lee, TN Dept of Health Officials, Henry County Medical Center leadership, state emergency management, and local government officials to make the best decisions for our community. Over the next several weeks we will continue to suffer inconveniences. It is important to take this threat seriously and follow CDC recommended guidelines to protect our health and the health of our families. Executive Order #17 also orders Tennesseans to cease congregations of 10 persons or more. Citizens should continue the practice of Social Distancing, meaning to stay at least six feet away from each other in all public set-

tings. We have an opportunity to limit the spread if we all will take this seriously. We can act now or risk the rapid spread of the coronavirus. Now is the time to act responsibly.”

It is important to understand the process of testing for COVID-19. There are several ways you may be tested either at your doctors office, at Henry County Medical Center, or at the Health Department. If you feel you need a test contact your health care provider first or contact the Henry County Health Department. Call ahead. If a test is ordered due to your symptoms or other qualifying conditions, patients should be prepared to self quarantine for up to 14 days per Center for Disease Control guidelines. You will be notified within 4 to 8 days depending on where you are tested. **While persons are awaiting test results, it is important to continue to self-quarantine to limit the spread.** In the State of Tennessee, it is a class B misdemeanor to “willfully disregard or evade quarantine” or violate “any rule or regulation made in attempting to prevent the spread of any epidemic disease”.

Henry County Sheriff Monte Belew has created a Sheriffs Dept Help Team. This team will provide support with medications, meals, and other needed errands to persons who do not have other means for support for assistance. This will include those who are following self-quarantine guidelines. Sheriffs Dept School Resource Officers will limit contact with persons as much as possible and persons are asked to call 731-644-8337 to leave a message for assistance and a call will be returned to you as soon as possible.

City of Paris and County essential services continue to operate normally and as safely as possible. If you have business to conduct, please call ahead for instructions on how to best be served.

Here are some things you can do to help.

If you believe you are ill with symptoms of the Coronavirus, we are asking residents to not go to the doctor or the HCMC Emergency Room before calling first. If you are feeling ill, stay at home. Keep in contact with senior citizens and those who are not well. They need to stay at home as much as possible and we need to support them and keep them safe.

#### **The CDC recommends these steps to protect yourself:**

- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.** Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick
- Put **distance between yourself and other people** if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This is especially important for [people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.](#)

If you feel you are becoming ill with flu like symptoms such as high fever, please stay home and call your primary healthcare provider for information. For additional information on COVID-19 you can call the Tennessee Statewide Coronavirus Public Information Line at 877-857-2945 10AM to 10PM CDT or 731-421-6782.