



PRESS RELEASE

29th January 2020

Update from Ministry of Health Regarding Novel Coronavirus

The Ministry of Health can confirm that there are no cases or known suspect cases of the coronavirus currently in Bermuda.

To be classified as a "suspect case", the World Health Organization (WHO) has defined specific criteria that an individual must have. This includes a relevant travel history risk or contact risk.

It should be noted that the situation is extremely dynamic, changing every few hours as information is gathered and shared by public health authorities. The WHO website is a trusted source of up to the moment global information: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

"I want to reassure the public that the Ministry of Health is working closely with stakeholders from different disciplines and sectors of society to plan and prepare for the possible introduction of coronavirus," said the Minister of Health the Hon. Kim Wilson JP MP. "This work includes very close collaboration with the Department of Customs, Department of Immigration and Skyport to enhance screening of arriving travelers and direct those with a travel history risk for further monitoring and assessment. Specifically, arriving travelers will be asked about their travel in the past 21 days and about current illness. Those who have spent time in jurisdictions considered at very high risk will be given health instructions for follow-up and advice on self-monitoring for illness for 14 days. The public should know that there is a health officer at the airport to assist with managing the situation at the port of entry and airport officials are in continuous communication with the Ministry of Health's Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit (ESU)."

The Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Cheryl Peek-Ball, said, "It should be noted that the coronavirus has not been fully characterized; its origin, mode of transmission and how it makes individuals ill is still being determined in clinical research settings worldwide. What we do know is that it appears to be transmitted from infected animals or humans to other humans and it takes between 2-10 days to incubate before making an infected individual ill with fever, cough, difficulty breathing."

The Minister added, "It is critical for the public to turn their attention only to the established, trusted sources of health information. The Bermuda Government website and Government 'Treefrog' App, as well as its Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages are the official sources of Ministry of Health information. These will be updated continuously as information is received and confirmed. If a case of 2019-nCoV is confirmed in Bermuda, contact tracing will begin immediately and relevant individuals will be contacted by Ministry of Health staff. Any situation posing a risk to the safety of the general public will be communicated through official Ministry of Health channels."