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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 1, 2020

Contact Lindsey Salvatelli
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COVID-19 can spread 48 hours before symptoms emerge

WOODSTOCK – The McHenry County Department of Health is reinforcing the extended shelter in place order in effect until April 30 as new evidence from the Centers for Disease Control indicates COVID-19 is contagious 48 hours before symptom onset.

The recent evidence that symptoms can be passed along 48 hours before symptoms appear demonstrates that anyone in the community not keeping physical distance from others can be exposed to the virus.

Medical Advisor Dr. Laura Buthod stated that the new evidence “makes staying home even more important.”

“You may be infected before you know it and spread the infection to people at high risk for severe illness. When you must go out, stay at least 6 feet away from others and stay out of crowded places,” Buthod said.

Because testing is not widely available, confirmed cases of COVID-19 in McHenry County are not reflective of the number of persons who have or have had COVID-19. McHenry County residents should assume everyone has COVID-19 and take precautions to prevent themselves from becoming ill and passing along the virus.

“We all must work together to limit the spread of the virus. Even when you are going out to exercise, space yourselves 6 feet apart on your walks, runs or hikes. Please stay home as much as possible and take this seriously,” Buthod said.

Precautions include:

- Keeping 6 feet away from your family even at home whenever possible
- Avoiding unnecessary trips outside the home
- Practicing good hand hygiene
- Not touching your face, especially eyes, nose or mouth
- Be aware of any symptoms of illness, even a scratchy throat or feeling achy

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- If symptoms appear, watch for fever, cough or shortness of breath. Contact your healthcare provider if those symptoms develop.
- COVID-19 illness can be mild. Make sure you are **symptom free** for a minimum of 72 hours without taking any medications before returning to work or heading to the store.

Across Illinois, the age of cases range from younger than one older than 100 years. The number of cases, confirmed and unconfirmed, are expected to rise. McHenry County currently has 79 confirmed cases and two deaths. Confirmed cases are updated on MCDH's COVID-19 website every day by 5 p.m.

Get the latest guidance for school, employers and community preparedness by visiting [Preventing COVID-19 Spread in Communities](#) or by visiting mcdh.info. For general questions about COVID-19, call the IDPH hotline at 1-800-889-3931 or email dph.sick@illinois.gov.

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