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Coronavirus Awareness Update

March 27th, 2020

To the Citizens of University Park From the Office of the Fire Chief

This information is being shared with you to provide an update on the current status of the COVID-19 outbreak that is affecting many areas of Illinois and the United States. As a reminder to all citizens, the State of Illinois, in accordance with Executive Order 20-10, is under a “Stay at Home” Order, requiring all citizens to stay home with exceptions for essential needs and those that are employed within essential services professions. This Order is in effect through April 7th, 2020.

Current Illinois Data on COVID-19

As of March 26th, 2020, the Illinois Department of Public Health reports 2,538 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Illinois. Most of these cases are located in the City of Chicago and in Cook County. Unfortunately, there have been 26 deaths in Illinois related to COVID-19. Of all confirmed cases in Illinois, 67 have been reported in Will County. A total of 16,631 tests have been administered across the State. This means the majority of possible cases (85%) have been found to be negative.

COVID-19 Prevention

All Citizens are being asked to obey the Illinois Executive Order and stay home. If you must go out into public, please continue to practice social distancing and spend as little time as possible away from home. Whether at home or in public, please remember to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Hand washing remains a key factor in preventing infection of any kind. When at home, and especially when in public, remember to wash your hands frequently.

Prevention Results

During the State Press Conference yesterday, Health Officials in Illinois reported that the State was under the curve of predicted case load that it was expected to have at this period. This is good news, but this **IS NOT** a signal to lower our guard against this virus. The prevention steps are working to slow the spread of this virus, along with the stay home order, so we need to continue to do our small part to help protect ourselves and those around us; especially those at higher risk.

COVID-19 Transmission

The *New York Times* released an analysis of all COVID-19 cases in the United States. Their research found that the Number 1 cause of viral spread within our country was “personal contact with an infected person.” In other words, we are doing this to ourselves. This is why it is important to stay home, practice social distancing, and follow all recommendations provided by the CDC. These actions may seem simple but, collectively, they can add up to equal huge results.



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Protecting your Physical Health:

In addition to the items provided above, taking care of your immune system is equally as important in maintaining your physical health. Eating a healthy diet, getting adequate sleep, and minimizing stress are all ways to keep your immune system healthy and ready to fight off viruses. It is important to consult your Doctor before making extreme diet or lifestyle changes. For more information on immune system health, you can start by clicking this link:

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/how-to-boost-your-immune-system>

Protecting your Mental Health:

Mental health is a key component in handling stressful situations. This is especially important for those that may be suffering from a current mental health illness. Taking breaks from news coverage, avoiding “triggers” of anxiety on social media, and limiting information only from trusted sources can help all of us manage stress. Information overload is a real thing that can break even the strongest minds. For more information on mental health, you can click on this link:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

Personal Protective Equipment

There are many questions and concerns regarding the need for protective equipment such as masks and gloves. According to the World Health Organization, if you are healthy, you do not need to wear a mask. Masks are only effective when used in conjunction with gloves and proper hand hygiene. There is an extreme shortage of masks for First Responders and Healthcare Workers. Masks being used and worn by those that do not need them creates even more of a shortage.

The use of gloves can offer some level of barrier in terms of contact protection. However, if gloves are used incorrectly, they can spread germs faster and farther than one may think. Gloves need to be changed regularly to prevent what is known as Cross-Contamination or Germ Dissemination. Touching multiple objects with gloves may keep you safe, but you may end up being the carrier that spreads germs from object to object, which puts others around you at risk.

For mask needs, proper use, and proper disposal, please visit:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>

For gloves need, proper use, and proper disposal, please visit:

https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/Glove_Use_Information_Leaflet.pdf