

**News from the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders**  
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## County Health Department's Response Is Proactive to New Coronavirus

The Somerset County Department of Health (SCDOH) is working with state and federal health officials to respond to a new emerging coronavirus 2019-nCoV, which originated from Wuhan, China, but one case has been found in Washington State, and in Illinois. The SCDOH is the lead county agency to coordinate public health disease response, in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), local hospitals, medical providers, and emergency medical services.

While the CDC considers the coronavirus 2019-nCoV to be a serious public health concern, based on current information, the immediate health risk from the 2019-nCoV to the American public is considered low at this time. Outbreaks of novel (new) virus infections among people are always a public health concern, but regular training prepares public health staff and partners to handle emerging disease outbreaks like the 2019-nCoV.

The SCDOH is working with healthcare providers and other health departments to quickly identify any cases within the county that may be related to the 2019-nCoV outbreak. The SCDOH is taking proactive preparedness precautions by monitoring the situation, enhancing disease surveillance, working with area healthcare providers, and keeping the public informed. The most up-to-date information will be made available on the SCDOH website at [www.co.somerset.nj.us/health](http://www.co.somerset.nj.us/health).

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. There are several known coronaviruses that infect people and these usually only cause mild respiratory diseases, such as the common cold. However, at least two previously identified coronaviruses have caused severe disease – severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). Symptoms of the 2019-nCoV include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. There are currently no proven treatments or vaccines for this respiratory disease, so it is important to contact your doctor if you have traveled and are experiencing any of these symptoms.

Since it is cold and flu season, you may experience similar symptoms to the coronavirus. Unless you have traveled to the affected areas in the world, there is little concern for exposure to 2019-nCoV. As with all respiratory illnesses, it is good practice to wash your hands often, stay away from people that appear ill, or have been ill and stay home if you are sick.

For more information, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

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