The following talking points are provided to inform you about the current situation related to the COVID-19 outbreak.

**Current as of 3/9/20**

- **The situation is fluid and guidance may be updated or changed at any time**
- The first cases in Ohio were reported March 9, 2020. There are now multiple cases.
- Risk level in Ohio currently low
- The epidemic is moving toward a pandemic
- China has the most number of cases and deaths
- An increasing number of countries are affected
- The first U.S. case was reported on January 21, in the state of Washington
- There have been deaths in the United States
- There has been travel-related transmission
- There has been community spread (which means a case with no known connection to another case)
- Most at risk are those in close contact of people with COVID-19, healthcare workers treating patients, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems.
- Symptoms are similar to the flu; fever over 100°F, dry cough, difficulty breathing
- Most people sickened will have a mild case and may go unreported, some people will require hospitalization, and some people will die
- COVID-19 is spread similar to the flu including droplets on surfaces
- Approximately 20,000 to 60,000 people die each year from the flu
- COVID-19 may stay on surfaces for up to 48 hours but the exact time period is unknown
- The incubation period is believed to be up to 14 days
- People may be able to spread the disease even when they show no sign of symptoms
- The public should use similar precautions as those to prevent the flu; wash hands thoroughly and frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, cover coughs and sneezes, sanitize frequently, stay home when sick
- Those who are not sick, should not wear masks
- We do not know if there is a seasonal effect to the spread
- Travelers should follow CDC guidance regarding most current travel warnings. CDC warns against cruise ship travel for elderly and those with weakened immune systems
- There is no vaccine but scientists are working to develop a vaccine, that could take more than a year
- Scientists are working to develop an antiviral treatment
- When a person becomes ill they are “isolated” meaning they are contagious, and are separated from people who are not sick. A “quarantine” is used to restrict the movement of those who are not sick, while they are being monitored to determine if they become sick. This will happen when someone is at risk due to coming into close contact with someone who has COVID-19 and would last 14 days.
- People should be prepared in the event they should need to be quarantined. This would include; having enough food, water, medicine, and other supplies they may need. They should make arrangements with their work for their absense and transportation and other needs for their school age children.

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Workplaces
- Workplaces should develop flexible sick leave policies
- Workplaces should allow for working remotely when possible
- Workplaces should plan for increased absenteeism and supply chain disruptions
- Facilities should maintain and enhance routine cleaning with particular attention to frequently touched surfaces
- Disinfectants with a bleach mixture may be used on surfaces

Schools
- Schools should encourage proper hygiene
- Schools should maintain cleaning procedures
- Students and staff should stay home when sick
- Schools should plan for low staff and student levels
- Schools should plan for what they would do if they should have to close
- Disinfectants with a bleach mixture may be used on surfaces

Local Health Department Response
- Coordinate messages with your local health department (LHD)
- LHDs are coordinating response with Ohio Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- LHDs are coordinating traveler monitoring with the Ohio Department of Health
- LHDs have activated Incident Management Teams as part of their routine Emergency Preparedness procedures
- LHDs are coordinating with local municipalities, EMS and hospitals
- LHDs are providing communication messages to community partners and the public

General Messages
- Be sure to get information from reliable sources including your local health department
- When consuming and sharing information on social media be sure to be using a credible source
- It is safe to receive packages from China, the disease will not last on surfaces during time of delivery
- Do not discriminate or exclude people based on race, anyone can get COVID-19
- Be Kind, Show Compassion, Care for and Help Those Who Need It

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