

NCDHHS Provides Coronavirus Update for Travelers Returning to North Carolina

By Administrator

Friday, 07 February 2020 10:51 -

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local health departments to respond to the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak and assure the health and well-being of North Carolinians as residents return from China. The federal government is recommending self-monitoring with public health supervision for all travelers returning from mainland China (excluding Hubei Province) who have been screened at one of 11 airports and found to have no symptoms. These travelers will be allowed to travel to their final destination. Impacted travelers in North Carolina will receive written instructions from their local health department on how to monitor for symptoms and limit the potential spread of the infection.

The federal government is quarantining all people traveling from the Hubei Province, which is the epicenter of the outbreak and isolating anyone arriving in the United States from China with symptoms.

“In light of the rapidly evolving situation with a new virus, North Carolina is taking a proactive approach to protect the health and well-being of recent travelers from North Carolina and our communities,” said NCDHHS State Health Director and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Elizabeth Cuervo Tilson. “Fortunately, we have not had any cases of novel coronavirus in North Carolina so far, but we are continually monitoring and will make changes to our response as needed.”

Currently, the federal government is requiring that:

- All travelers to the United States who have been in China in the past 14 days are being routed to 11 airports, none of which are in North Carolina. There they are screened for travel history and symptoms.
- Travelers who have returned from Hubei province in China where the outbreak is centered are quarantined by the federal government for 14 days in those ports of entry.
- Travelers from elsewhere in China with symptoms of respiratory illness remain in those ports of entry under isolation and monitoring by federal health officials.
- Travelers from China (excluding Hubei Province) without symptoms will be allowed to continue to their final destination. These travelers will self-monitor with public health supervision.

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NCDHHS will receive notification of asymptomatic travelers who are permitted to continue to North Carolina as their final destination from CDC's Division of Global Migration and Quarantine. This list will be shared with appropriate local health departments, who will contact travelers and provide them with written public health guidance for people under monitoring to be reviewed and acknowledged by both the local health department and traveler.

The risk to the general public in North Carolina, especially without history of travel to China, is still considered very low at this time. Remember that the steps to take to prevent the spread of flu and the common cold could also help prevent the spread of other respiratory viruses like 2019-nCoV:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid exposure to others who are sick.
- Stay home when you are ill.

People who have questions or concerns related to 2019-nCoV can call 866-462-3821 for more information. Press 1 for English or to ask for a language interpreter. Spanish speakers should press 2. To submit questions online, go to www.ncpoisoncontrol.org and select "Chat";

There are also resources available on the Division of Public Health website at www.ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus and on the CDC's website at cdc.gov/coronavirus.