

Media Release  
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## **City of Clintonville Official Statement on COVID-19**

We'd like to take a moment to address the elephant in the room: COVID-19, commonly known as the Corona Virus. Many people, as you are probably aware, are panicking. Many others believe that the government and the media are making mountains out of molehills. The City of Clintonville certainly cannot predict if or when COVID-19 will reach Clintonville, nor predict how severe the problem may be. Also, if the virus does become a significant problem here, it is unreasonable to believe that a local government has the resources to address the virus directly and completely.

So, what does this mean? This means that we fall back on what we do know for certain and we act based on that knowledge.

### What do we know?

We know that there are 8 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the State of Wisconsin, including at least one as close as Fond du Lac County. We know that, like other respiratory viruses, it travels in water droplets in the air, generally expressed from a person breathing, coughing, or sneezing. It can travel several feet through the air in this fashion and be transferred by physical contact after it settles on a surface. COVID-19 can survive for hours, perhaps as much as a day, on an exposed surface.

We know that COVID-19 is spreading at an exponential rate. What this means as a practical matter is that when a person is infected with COVID-19 they typically infect several other people before they are isolated. You can see how this creates a snowball effect.

We know that the vast majority of healthy individuals who contract COVID-19 recover with no serious issues. However, the elderly and individuals whose health is already compromised are quite susceptible and the virus can be quite deadly. The vast majority of individuals who have died from COVID-19 have been at least 70 years of age.

### What do we do?

We act conservatively, attempt to minimize disrupting daily life in the community while taking the small, but vitally important steps to limit COVID-19 contagion.

The first aspect of our response is to address how we are thinking about this, as how we think about the problem will dictate how we take action. First and foremost, if you are a healthy young adult, the actions we are asking you to take are not to keep *you* from getting sick. You will probably be just fine. We are trying to halt the spread so that it does not infect our senior citizens who are genuinely vulnerable to this disease. So, if you are telling yourself that you don't have to take precautions because you are strong and healthy, remember that you are doing this to protect *them*, not yourself.

Besides protecting the vulnerable, if or when COVID-19 does show up in Clintonville, we are trying to reduce the rate of contagion so that our local hospitals and clinics are not overwhelmed with a flood of patients. If the average person who contracts COVID-19 in Clintonville passes the virus to two other people before being identified instead of five, that difference is enormous to the medical community.

### General Precautions

Most of these things, you will have heard from the larger news media and have been advised by the Center for Disease Control and other health agencies.

- Avoid unnecessary travel
- Avoid crowds
- Maintain greater than normal ‘social distance’.
- Wash your hands frequently
- Avoid touching your face
- Frequently sanitize surfaces that are frequently touched by multiple people such as doorknobs and faucets
- If you believe you may be infected, self-quarantine
- If you feel ill, call in sick to work
- Do not hoard hand sanitizer. It is far more effective for you, your coworkers and your neighbors to each have one bottle than it is for you to have 23

### At the workplace

- If you can let people work from home, please do
- If you can utilize different shifts to create more space between individuals in the workplace, please do so
- Consider temporarily removing unnecessary communal utilities that are touched by many people such as coffee machines and water coolers.
- Where possible, leave doors open to reduce the need for many people to touch the door or door knob
- Leave hand sanitizer out and readily available (if you can find any)

Over the coming days, City staff will be meeting with other local agencies and organizations to discuss preparations and response protocol in the event the virus becomes present in the community. As more information is available, the City will release additional statements and attempt to circulate that information as widely as possible through local media, the city’s website, and social media platforms. While it is possible that this may not be severe, one only has to look at countries like Italy and China to realize it is also quite possible this could be quite deadly. It is the City’s hope when this is all done that the community will think the City overreacted because that is certainly better than the alternative.

Richard K. Beggs, Mayor

