**Press Release**

**03/19/2020**

**Public Health COVID-19 Update**

**FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION**

Public Health Update: Baca County Public Health Agency would like to remind everyone of the importance of adhering to the advice to stay at home as much as possible for the next few weeks. An emergency declaration was made by the County Commissioners this morning. Though we do not have positive tests in our region we do not have many tests and, as the Front Range is now running out of tests, we are not likely to get more. The more we can try to delay the arrival of COVID-19 to our area, the more likely we are to minimize fatalities. We acknowledge that this will be a hardship, and we sincerely thank you for taking these efforts to protect the public’s health. Please consider these important things:

* General Public: Let’s come together to support our local, small businesses during this difficult time. To the best of our ability, let’s continue to give them business through the allowable take-out option.
* Our priority is keeping the people of our communities safe. We are urging Coloradans to exercise personal responsibility to protect public health, especially populations at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, including:
	+ Older people (over age 60), especially those over 80 year of age.
	+ People who have chronic medical conditions like heart, lung, or kidney disease, or diabetes. Older people with chronic medical conditions are at greatest risk. Everyone’s daily preventive actions are important in reducing spread to people who may experience more severe illness.

**PREVENTION MESSAGES FROM COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT (CDPHE)**

* Coloradans should stay informed and take simple preventive actions.
	+ Frequently and thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
	+ Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash, or use your inner elbow or sleeve.
	+ Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
	+ Stay home if you’re sick, and keep your children home if they are sick.
	+ Clean surfaces in your home, and personal items such as cell phone, using regular household products.
	+ Be calm and prepared.
* Good sources of information are:
	+ CO HELP: COVID-19 Hotline: Call 202-289-1687 or 1-877-462-2911 for answers in many languages including English, Spanish (Español), Mandarin (普通话) and more.
	+ State Public Health web page: <https://covid19.colorado.gov/>
	+ Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/CDPHE/>) and Twitter (@CDPHE)
	+ CDC web page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
	+ Baca County website: <https://www.bacacountyco.gov/>