Commissioners: plans are in place to meet coronavirus threat

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. – The Klamath County Board of Commissioners today announced that preparations to meet the ongoing threat of coronavirus have been well underway for more than two weeks by Klamath County Public Health (KCPH).

All three expressed their concern about the presumed coronavirus case in Washington County. The case announcement came late Friday, after Governor Kate Brown had activated a Coronavirus Response team. The nation’s first coronavirus death, in Washington State, came today.

"KCPH has monitored this situation since January, and has the proven experience of previous public health emerging threats, such as swine flu and Ebola," said Commissioner Public Health liaison Kelley Minty Morris. "The team has built a strong plan and network."

The Commissioners were briefed by Public Health this morning and agreed that all Klamath County would appreciate knowing the work being done on their behalf.

"Public Health works continuously behind the scenes to ensure the health and safety of the community," Boyd said. "This is a public health issue; it is not yet an emergency."

Commissioner DeGroot confirmed that Public Health works in concert with the Oregon Health Authority and its regional public health partners to ensure procedures and protocols are in place long before issues arise.

"Public Health Director Jennifer Little has a strong, experienced team and they are prepared to work with the community," said Boyd. "They are updating their community partners, checking the status of the outbreak nationally, and remembering that they are in the service of their friends and neighbors."

Should members of the public have a fever or respiratory illness, they should call their health care provider to discuss treatment. Flu season is still in effect and community members do not need to expose others to receive medical help.

"Unfortunately, coronavirus is an extreme respiratory illness," said Dr. Wendy Warren, KCPH health officer. "Many people might panic when having flu symptoms. We want everyone to remain calm and know we all have responsibility for public health."

Public Health has electronic signage for printing and social media cards, if anyone is interested. It can be reached 541.882.8846.

To see daily updates on national and worldwide coronavirus information, visit publichealth.klamathcounty.org/coronavirus.

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