

March 11, 2020

To the Linfield Community,

Many of you received an email from Linfield College President Dr. Miles Davis outlining steps the college has already implemented to protect the campus community and slow the spread of the coronavirus COVID-19. Dr. Davis described the team of staff, faculty and administrators who are meeting regularly to devise and adjust Linfield's approach as new information becomes available. Members of this team are in regular contact with local and state health authorities and we are taking our guidance from the Oregon Health Authority as well as sharing and learning from colleagues on other campuses in the region and throughout the United States. Due to the dynamic nature of this infection Linfield's response and plans will evolve as well.

On March 11, the Oregon Health Authority announced four new presumptive positive cases in Oregon. The cases are spread broadly around the state and three of the four cases had no known contact with a source known to have COVID-19 or recent travel to a country with widespread illness. These cases are described as community acquired, meaning the virus is active in those communities. The fourth case was a contact of a previously known case. Although there have been no positive test results in Yamhill County, where the McMinnville campus is located, neighboring counties have experienced positive cases and Multnomah County, the site of Linfield School of Nursing, reported a positive test yesterday. There is no reason to believe Yamhill County will avoid the arrival of the virus, if we have not already experienced its arrival. To date no one in Yamhill County has tested positive or been so ill as to be hospitalized.

Below is a comment and some guidance from Dr. Dean Sidelinger M.D., M.S.Ed, with the Oregon Health Authority Public Health Division.

"I know it's difficult to learn that we are seeing more active community spread of COVID-19, but this is something we've been expecting," said Dean Sidelinger, M.D., M.S.Ed.. "It's a good reminder to take steps to protect yourself, and vulnerable friends and family members, by washing your hands, covering your coughs and sneezes, and staying home if you're sick."

Health officials continue to urge all Oregonians to take steps to protect those who are most vulnerable to complications from COVID-19. Those considered "high risk" include adults 60 and older, or anyone with a serious health condition, including lung or heart problems, kidney disease, or diabetes, or anyone who has a suppressed immune system.

People vulnerable to complications should follow federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [recommendations](#) to stay home as much as possible and avoid gatherings.

Every resident should take these basic steps to protect those most at risk:

- Never visit a hospital or long-term-care facility if you have a fever or cough illness.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home if you feel ill.

The COVID-19 virus spreads like the flu, when someone who is sick coughs or sneezes close to another person (close means about six feet). As testing capacity increases — with Labcorp and Quest Diagnostics online, and clinical laboratories at some Oregon hospitals expected to begin testing by next week — officials expect the number of people who test positive with COVID-19 to rise.

This is a rapidly changing situation and we will bring the Linfield Community updates on a regular basis as more information comes to us.