NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE Release: Contact: Samantha Field, Public Information Officer
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Madison County Health Department Asks Local Residents to Help in Response to the Novel Coronavirus: Don't Seek Hospital or Emergency Room Treatment Unless Necessary

As we prepare for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), Madison County Health Department is providing this advice for people experiencing symptoms of a fever with cough and shortness of breath, who wonder whether they should seek medical care.

"Currently there are no identified cases of COVID-19 in Madison County. While we have no cases locally, we realize that many people are concerned because of cases identified recently in downstate New York and New York City, as well as in several other states in the U.S., and the fact that some people have died from infection with this virus," said Madison County Public Health Director Eric Faisst. "That's understandable. It may help to know that for most individuals, COVID-19 will be no worse than a tough year of seasonal flu that we are used to."

"In advance we're asking for everyone's help to make sure that emergency department treatment remains available for people who truly need it," Faisst said. "If or when COVID-19 makes its way to our area, in addition to caring for people with severe illnesses, local hospitals still have to manage their regular patient caseload."

Most people experience mild illness and recover from COVID-19 without needing medical treatment.

If you become sick, please stay at home and hold off on trips to public places and events until you are well. Faisst urges those who are NOT seriously ill to avoid hospital emergency departments, but instead contact their primary care doctor or health clinic.

Call your doctor right away or get emergency care in the event of severe or worsening illness.

People who have conditions that may result in more severe illness from COVID-19 should call their health care provider if they have symptoms of COVID-19. These people include women who are pregnant, persons 65 and older, and persons of any age who have a preexisting medical condition.

Unless you have been given specific instructions from the Health Department or a Healthcare provider, you should go about your daily lives, but take certain precautions:

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands).

- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- If you feel sick, stay home.
- Should you become ill, contact your doctor first before visiting their office to make arrangements for care.
- If you are well you do NOT need to wear a facemask. Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms to prevent the spread of the disease or by health care providers.
- Avoid public places and events with large crowds to lower the chances of coming into contact with germs that could make you sick.
- Make sure you have enough prescription medications and fever reducing medication to last you if you get sick and need to stay home while you are sick.
- Stock up on a week or two of foods and drinks you like to have when you are home sick.
- Keep cleaning supplies on hand, consider use of a bleach solution or alcohol wipes to clean and disinfect surfaces at home or work following the product label and instructions for use.

Stay informed.

For more information about the novel Coronavirus, visit Madison County at https://www.madisoncounty.ny.gov/2479/Coronavirus-COVID-19, call the New York State Coronavirus Hotline 1-888-364-3065, and visit CDC at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html.

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