



635 Florence Ave, PO Box 890  
Owatonna, MN 55060  
507-444-7650  
**toll free from:**  
*Blooming Prairie* 583-2283  
*Ellendale* 684-2211

**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
**Steele County Public Health**

**fax:** 507-444-7668  
*scphn@co.steele.mn.us*  
*www.co.steele.mn.us*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**March 21, 2020**

**Contact: Amy Caron**  
**Cell Phone: 507-676-5407**

## **First Cases of COVID-19 Confirmed in Steele County**

Two cases of Coronavirus (COVID-19) have been confirmed in Steele County. Amy Caron, Steele County Public Health Director, was notified by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) of the confirmation. Those affected are a person in their 40s and a person in their 50s with apparent transmission travelling to other States in both cases.

These patients are in isolation at home and recovering. Steele County Public Health is working with MDH and health care partners to address the needs of these patients and provide guidance to others who may have contact with them.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is spread primarily by respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It can also spread when people touch surfaces that have been contaminated by an infected person and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth.

There is much that we do not know about this virus and how it has rapidly mutated. We have no vaccine, no antiviral medication and can only treat the symptoms when they become serious. However, there are things we can do to protect ourselves, our family members, our neighbors and our vulnerable populations. NOW is the time to take action and SLOW the spread down in our communities. You can do this by taking the following actions:

- Practice Social or Physical Distancing from others by keeping a distance of 6 feet between you and others out in public.
- If you have an underlying health condition or are an older adult, take precautions now. Consider limiting any visitors to your home. Consider asking others to assist you in getting the things you need, such as groceries or medications so that you do not have to go out where there are groups of people.
- Do not gather in groups. Find new ways to conduct your daily business. Make use of technology and use phones, FaceTime, Skype and other ways to communicate

- Stay home if you have cold or flu-like symptoms and avoid close contact with people who are sick. Try to separate other people in your household from any members that are sick.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or into your sleeve, and then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom or before eating. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your face – especially your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect your home to remove germs: practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces
- If you have symptoms of a respiratory disease (these include fever, coughing, muscle aches, sore throat, and headache), you should stay home for at least 7 days, and for 3 days with no fever and improvement of respiratory symptoms—whichever is longer. (Your fever should be gone for 3 days without using fever-reducing medicine.)

The most reliable and up to date information on coronavirus can be found at The Centers for Disease Control [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov) and Minnesota Department of Health [www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus) websites. There is also an MDH hotline number at: (651)201-3920. Local questions can be answered by Steele County Public Health at: (507) 444-7650.