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For immediate release

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308-345-4223, 308-340-3611 (24/7 cell phone)

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Travel Alerts & Information News Release

Due to continuous new information and changing situations regarding the COVID-19 virus, Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) would like to keep our communities informed of the latest travel advisories and recommendations. With the public's help and cooperation, we can keep the spread of COVID-19 at a minimum.

"SWNPHD is aware of the two cases in Colorado, but at this time there are still no cases in Nebraska," states Kathie Skeen, Emergency Planning Coordinator. "We are constantly getting updates from the state of Nebraska and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) and as information changes we will update our communities."

If you live in Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins or Red Willow counties and have traveled within the last 14 days to one of the countries where COVID-19 is circulating, please report to Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department at 308-345-4223. Currently these countries are China, Iran, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan. You can also self-report to the Nebraska Public Health Online System at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/pages/Coronavirus.aspx>.

For travelers who have been to China, Italy, South Korea, and Iran, Nebraska's current state requirements are to self-report as directed above AND to self-quarantine for 14 days from the time they left these countries. This does not mean they have COVID-19, it is just a precaution because of potential exposure. These individuals will be actively monitored for symptoms by SWNPHD for the 14-day quarantine period.

Public Health Nurse Melissa Propp, RN recommends, "Wash your hands thoroughly and often, cover your cough, and stay home if you're sick. Influenza (flu) is still circulating in the health district and still poses a risk to our residents."

CDC does NOT recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 or influenza to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).

For more information, contact SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. SWNPHD serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins and Red Willow counties. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th St (1 block north of Arby's) in McCook or at 501 Broadway in Imperial (5th St. entrance). Information can also be found on the website www.swhealth.ne.gov and on Facebook and Twitter.

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