

Cherokee County Health Officials confirmed another positive case of Coronavirus (COVID-19) on Sunday, March 22, 2020. The 69 year-old man is fully cooperating with local health officials and is currently quarantined at home as his condition is not severe enough to warrant hospitalization at this time.

“As with any infectious disease investigation, which the Health Department regularly conducts with a variety of viruses, our team has been working with the man and have been able to rule out any recent travel to known and identified high risk areas along with any recent contact with any known positive cases. However, COVID-19 is able to spread and survive on certain surfaces for a period of several days, which is why we strongly encourage cleaning and sanitizing frequently touched areas,” stated Cherokee County Health Department Administrator Betha Elliott

Under Kansas Department of Health and Environment guidelines, those who are exhibiting symptoms of fever greater than 100°F, cough and shortness of breath, who also test negative for Influenza A and B may then be tested for COVID-19, at the direction of their medical provider. However, on Friday, Dr. Lee Norman, Secretary for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment warned the state is running low on their supply of nasal swabs and kits used to conduct the COVID-19 test.

Sunday’s positive test confirmation is the second positive case in Cherokee County with the first, coming from a 52 year-old man on Thursday, March 19th. Cherokee County Health Department Officials continue to monitor the condition of that man, who also remains quarantined at home.

“As this situation continues to evolve across the country and state, there is a very real concern of overwhelming our medical facilities and a lack of access to much needed personal protective equipment for medical providers and first responders. In the course of just one week, Kansas reported going from 6 positive COVID-19 cases to 55 on Saturday, March 21st.” Administrator Elliott went on to say.

Also over the weekend, a second Kansan lost his life. The death of the Johnson County man was announced during a daily update from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

“The overwhelming opinion of medical professionals across the country is we MUST all do our part to help stop the spread of this virus because while some may contract it and be able to handle the symptoms they also could unintentionally spread it to an elderly person or a person with a weakened autoimmune system and without necessary medical space and supplies, the outcome for them could be dire,” Elliott went on to warn.

In an effort to help COVID-19 from spreading, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment issued new requirements on March 18th mandating a 14 day quarantine for anyone who has traveled outside of the country or traveled on a cruise ship on or after March 15th, traveled to California, Florida, New York or Washington state on or after March 15th, visited Eagle, Summit, Pitkin and Gunnison counties in Colorado prior to or after March 15th, or have been notified by a public health official (state or local) that you are a close contact of a laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19.

“We can all do our part to care for our neighbors and help slow the spread by complying with the guidelines provided by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment along with the Centers for Disease Control and also by maintaining social distancing, working from home if possible, calling in sick if you can’t work from home and aren’t feeling good, not promoting or attending mass gatherings, frequently washing your hands with soap and warm water for a minimum of 20 seconds, disinfecting commonly touched areas and by calling your doctor or medical provider if you have non-emergent

symptoms of fever, cough and shortness of breath. Because we need to make an effort to keep our area medical professionals safe and healthy, it is strongly recommended anyone exhibiting these symptoms to first call their clinic or doctor's office so they can provide instructions on what time to arrive and whether or not they should come inside. Many times the medical provider will come to the patient's vehicle to assess them. Following these procedures helps ensure you don't inadvertently expose other patients or the medical staff," concluded Elliott.

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