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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NOTE: Dr. Bob England, Pima County Health Department Director, will be available for on-camera interviews from 6:00 to 6:30PM at the Abrams Public Health Center, 3950 S. Country Club Road. Interviews by phone can be completed between 6:30 and 7:00PM. Call Aaron Pacheco in order to arrange an interview by phone.

Health Department Announces Second Presumptive COVID-19 Case in Pima County

Officials are investigating a case currently receiving care at a local hospital

TUCSON — The Pima County Health Department (PCHD) announced today that a second Pima County resident has been presumptively diagnosed with COVID-19, the disease caused by the 2019 novel coronavirus. How the individual contracted the virus is currently under investigation and household contacts are under observation in home isolation.

A presumptive diagnosis was made March 13th at the Arizona State Public Health Laboratory in Phoenix. A sample will be sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, GA., for confirmation. The Health Department was notified Friday afternoon and is working hard to learn more about this individual's potential exposure to the virus. At this time there is no clear link between this case and the presumptive case identified in Pima County on March 9th.

PCHD is working to identify additional close contacts that may have been exposed while the person was infectious. Any individuals who have been identified as having been exposed will be contacted directly. These individuals will be monitored for fever and respiratory symptoms in collaboration with PCHD and medical providers. This individual had recently traveled to another U.S. state, however, investigators are still working to identify whether or not this person contracted the virus during this travel.

"This new case highlights the importance of hospitals, doctors, public health, and the general public working closely together," said Dr. Bob England, Director of the Pima County Health Department. "Our disease investigators have been working day and night to protect public health, and are in the process of identifying and reaching out to any people who may have been in contact with the case while infectious."

COVID-19 spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Symptoms are thought to appear within 2 to 14 days after exposure and consist of fever, cough, runny nose, or difficulty breathing. Those considered at highest risk for contracting the virus are individuals with travel to an area where the virus is spreading, or individuals in close contact with a person who is diagnosed as having COVID-19.

The best ways to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including COVID-19, are to:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then immediately throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Public health officials advise residents that flu and other respiratory diseases are circulating in the community, and are recommending everyone get a flu shot and follow basic prevention guidelines.

If you have recently traveled to an area where COVID-19 is circulating, and have developed fever with cough or shortness of breath within 14 days of your travel, or have had contact with someone who is suspected to have 2019 novel coronavirus, please stay home. Most people with COVID-19 develop mild symptoms. If you have mild symptoms, please do not seek medical care, but do stay home and practice social distancing from others in the household where possible. If you do have shortness of breath or more severe symptoms, please call your health care provider to get instructions before arriving.

For the latest information about COVID-19, visit www.pima.gov/COVID19 or by calling (520) 626-6016.

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