Caddo Parish announces local case of COVID-19

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

A presumptive positive case of COVID-19 or coronavirus has been detected in Caddo Parish, according to officials.

A middle-aged male with no risk factors and no history of travel self-presented to a local hospital. He was admitted, and a test for coronavirus was conducted.

"A positive test for COVID-19 was expected within Caddo Parish," said Caddo Homeland Security Director/Sheriff Steve Prator. "Elected officials and first responders are prepared and making decisions as the situation dictates. The best defense is good hygiene and common sense, and this too will pass."

Dr. Martha Whyte, Regional Medical Director/Administrator for the Office of Public Health, agreed, saying, "We knew it was probably here. We need to stay calm, and use our knowledge to protect ourselves, especially the elderly." She added that with the hospital's help, the Office of Public Health will be contacting those who have had significant contact with the individual. "There is no need to worry. We will be reaching out to you," she said.

In Louisiana, there have been 13 cases with presumptive positive results: one each in Caddo, Iberia, and Jefferson parishes, and 10 in Orleans Parish. None has resulted in death. Whyte said presumptive cases are considered positive and will be double checked by the CDC.

According to the Louisiana Department of Health, the current risk to the general public is low. Reported cases have ranged from mild illness (similar to a common cold) to severe pneumonia that requires hospitalization. So far, deaths have been reported mainly in older adults who had other health conditions.

Symptoms can include fever, cough, and shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.The CDC believes at this time that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 after exposure.

Whyte continues to stress the importance of protecting yourself by washing your hands, keeping your hands off your face, covering your nose when you sneeze, and staying home when you are sick. This is important, especially for the elderly, she said.

Should you become ill or suspect that you may be infected, you are urged to contact your doctor first, and they will advise you in an effort to limit exposure to others. The same is true if you are visiting an Emergency Room. Call ahead.