Bell County Public Health District

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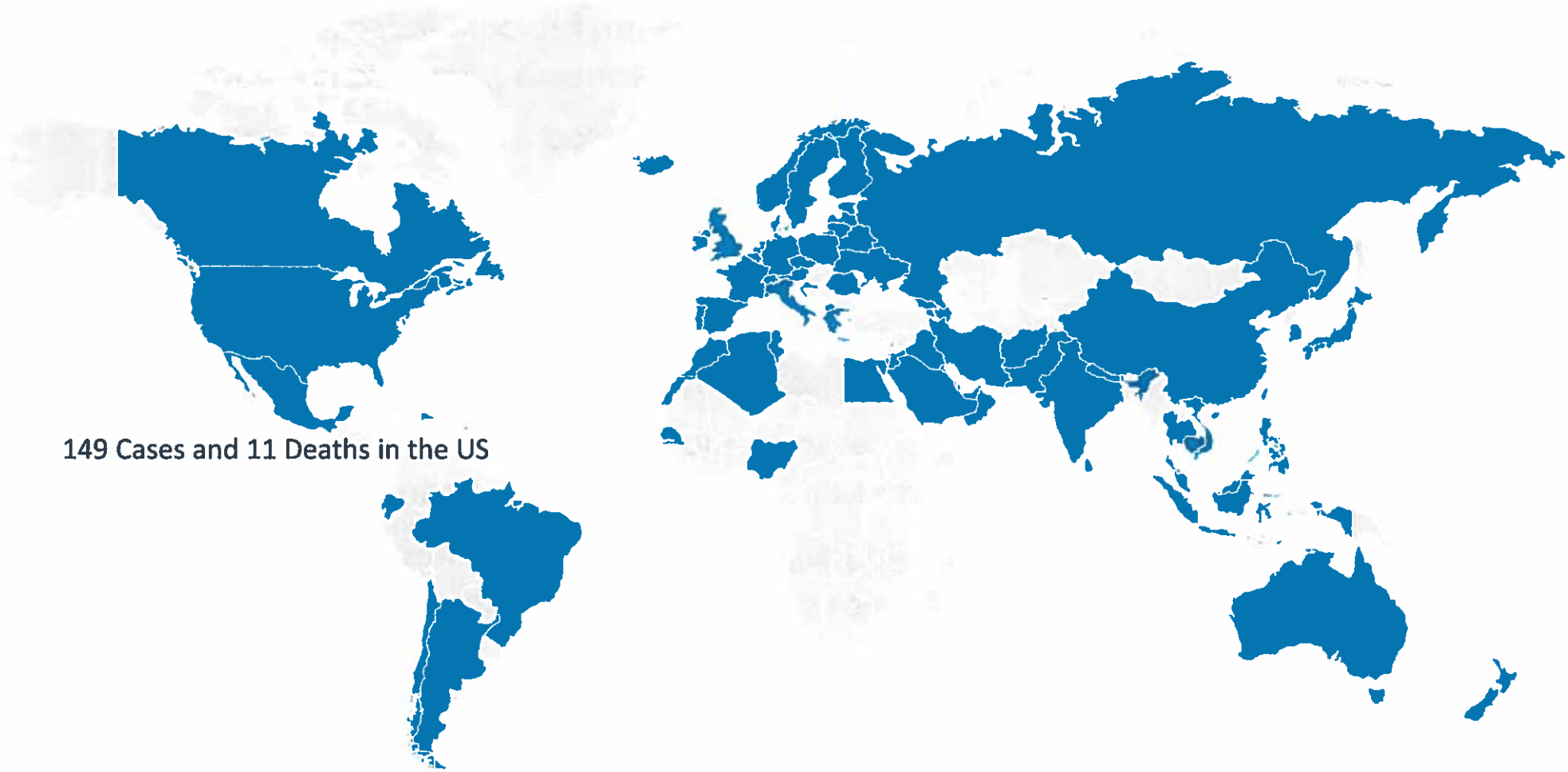
What is the COVID19 and Why is it important?

- A novel coronavirus is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified.
- The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is not the same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and cause mild illness, like the common cold.
- The COVID19 Virus is important because our bodies have not been exposed to it and have not developed an immune response to it.
- People with who are older, have a weakened immune system or who have health problems such as: heart disease, diabetes, COPD or are taking cancer treatment can be more susceptible to severe infection.
- The disease causing the outbreak is was identified in Wuhan, China, and is called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, shortened to SARS-CoV-2.

How Does The Virus Spread ?

- The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to spread easily and sustainably in some geographically affected areas like China, Italy, South Korea, and Iran.
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person. Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Small droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or get inhaled into the lungs.
- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).
- Some spread may be possible before people show symptoms.
- Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.


149 Cases and 11 Deaths in the US

What is the Current Situation?

- Currently there are cases in the United States outside of those travel related cases defined earlier in the COVID19 outbreak.
- The first Texas COVID 19 case was announced by The Texas Department of State Health Services and Fort Bend County today.
- Having a COVID-19 case in Texas is a significant development in this outbreak, but it doesn't change the fact that the immediate risk to most Texans is low.
- This travel-related case reinforces that we should all be taking basic hygiene steps that are extremely effective in limiting limit the spread of COVID-19 and all respiratory illnesses.
- Research into COVID-19 demonstrates that about 80 percent of cases are mild with most people not needing hospitalization. Older adults and people with underlying health conditions like heart disease, lung disease and diabetes are at a greater risk of complications.

What can we do to protect our community?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

Each of as individuals has an important role to play.

- Each one can avoid close contact with people who appear sick
- Avoid touching our eyes, nose and mouth with unclean hands
- Stay home when we are sick
- Cover our cough or sneeze with a tissue and then throw the tissue in the trash
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a household cleaner with coronavirus destructive capability (most regular cleaners)
- Don't Travel to areas with active community spread of the COVID19 virus
- Most importantly, wash your hands with warm soap and water regularly and use hand sanitizers with a high alcohol content when soap and water are not available.

What can businesses Do to Help?

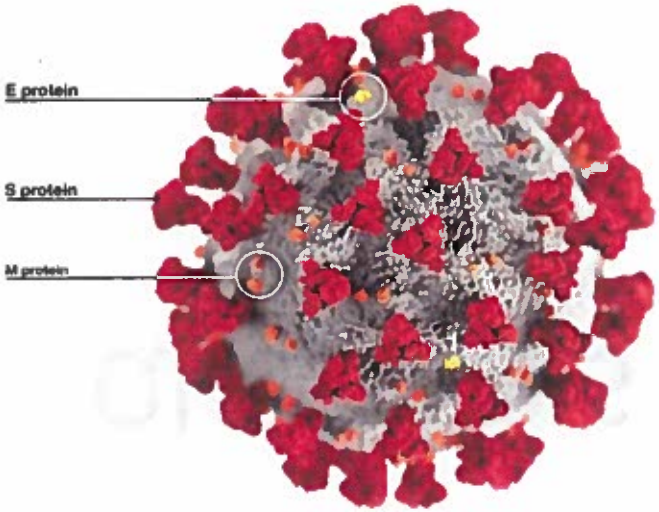
Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever.

- Employees with signs of a fever, and any other symptoms should stay home for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.
- Ensure that your sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of these policies.
- Do not require a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work, as healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.
- Employers should maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member.
- Employers should be aware that more employees may need to stay at home to care for sick children or other sick family members than is usual.
- Increase Cleaning of frequently touched surfaces in the work-place
- Post signs to remind employees to wash hands frequently and use good cough & sneeze etiquette

What Can Community Leaders Do?

CDC has developed recommended actions for preventing the spread of COVID-19 at mass gatherings and large community events. The **Before**, **During**, and **After** sections of this guidance offer suggested strategies to help you plan for and implement these recommendations (see these at CDC.gov/COVID19)

- Depending on the severity any local outbreak, public health officials may recommend community actions designed to limit exposure to COVID-19.
- Officials may ask you to modify, postpone, or cancel large events for the safety and well-being of your event staff, participants, and the community.
- The details of your emergency operations plan should be based on the size and duration of your events, demographics of the participants, complexity of your event operations, and type of on-site services and activities your event may offer.
- Talk with County Leaders to determine what thresholds are best for your communities.



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QUESTIONS ?