

## **CENTRAL DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT COVID-19 UPDATE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 11, 2020**

As of 3:00 p.m. today, CDHD reports a total of 1,410 COVID-19 positive cases and a total of 43 deaths in the Central District, broken down by county as follows: Hall 1,338 cases and 35 deaths; Hamilton 53 cases and 8 deaths; and Merrick 19 cases and zero deaths.

In light of new data about how COVID-19 spreads, along with evidence of widespread COVID-19 illness in communities in Central District, we strongly recommend that people wear a cloth face covering to cover their nose and mouth in the community setting. This is an additional public health measure people should take to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in addition to (not instead of) social distancing, frequent hand cleaning and other everyday preventive actions.

A cloth face covering is not intended to protect the wearer but may prevent the spread of virus from the wearer to others. This would be especially important in the event that someone is infected but does not have symptoms. A cloth face covering should be worn whenever people must go into public settings (grocery stores, for example). Medical masks and N-95 respirators are reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

Cloth face coverings can be fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost. Cloth face coverings should fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face be secured with ties or ear loops, include multiple layers of fabric allow for breathing without restriction, be able to be laundered ,and machine dried without damage or change to shape. Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. A washing machine should suffice in properly washing a face covering. Individuals should be careful not to touch their eyes, nose, and mouth when removing their face covering and wash hands immediately after removing. The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

It is not necessary to wear a mask outdoors if you're in an area where there are no people within sight. But if you're in a city or other more populated area where you're more likely to cross paths with other folks, you should wear a facial covering, or at least bring one in case you need it. Carry your mask in a clean paper bag rather than stuffing it into a pocket.

Know that even medical-grade masks are not 100% effective in stopping the spread of the virus; homemade facial coverings are even less effective. Wearing a mask should always be done in addition to and *not* in place of social distancing. Preventing the spread of COVID-19 and protecting loved ones is everyone's responsibility.