

*March 12, 2020*

The Diocese of Arlington Office of Catholic Schools continues to work with Local Health Departments and is closely monitoring the health crisis in China and globally associated with novel coronavirus infections (COVID-19).

As you may be aware, on Wednesday, the Virginia Department of Health announced nine patients have tested positive for COVID-19 in Virginia. Virginia's ninth case is a teenager from Hanover County and is connected to international travel.

Tuesday's cases involved one resident of Loudoun County, and two residents of Virginia Beach. On Monday, a resident in Arlington County was the third case after returning from international travel. A fourth patient tested positive in Fairfax, and resides in the same home where another person tested positive for COVID-19 over the weekend. According to Virginia's Department of Health, the individual traveled on the same Nile River cruise as her husband. And a fifth patient tested positive in Spotsylvania County.

Virginia health officials said there is no evidence that the virus is spreading in Virginia and all cases have been travel related. However, as this outbreak may continue to evolve, it will become more likely that an individual within our communities could potentially be exposed or become ill with coronavirus. Therefore additional precautions may become necessary. Future travel should be reconsidered and events may be cancelled within communities in the weeks ahead.

**The Virginia Health Departments do not recommend school closures at this time.** We are aware of the concerns about this virus and the impact on our communities. Updates will continue to be shared as information is made available to us.

For more information, the [Virginia Department of Health's coronavirus website](#) shows the number of test results and those being monitored for the

illness in Virginia. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has also provided a [coronavirus disease situation summary](#).

The safety of our students is our priority and travel abroad carries potential risks. Be aware that even a country not currently experiencing an outbreak could suddenly be declared a high-risk area, posing risks of exposure, difficulty with travel, or barriers upon return to the U.S.

We are asking for parents/guardians, faculty and staff to please notify schools of travel plans in an effort to continue to keep communities healthy. The countries of concern change daily and allowing us to know your plans will help us to work with you upon your return.

The CDC maintains a [travel information website](#).

It is strongly recommended not traveling to locations with [CDC](#) or [State Department Level 3](#) alerts or higher.

Consider Enrollment in the State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, or [STEP](#), to receive current embassy alerts and messages for your destinations.

**As we all prepare for COVID-19 in Virginia, please be aware of several major, recent developments:**

**CDC recently updated guidance for travelers arriving in the United States from countries with widespread ongoing community transmission (i.e., those with a [Level 3 - Travel Health Notice](#), which currently includes China, Iran, Italy, and South Korea). These travelers are being advised to stay home and avoid contact with others for 14 days from the time that the person departed the area. They should not go to work or school and should avoid public transportation and activities. Travelers from countries with a [Level 2- Travel Health Notice](#) (currently Japan) are advised to stay home to the extent possible and limit public activities for 14 days after leaving the affected area. More details are available on the [VDH website](#) (see Travelers tab).**

**Please continue to visit [CDCs COVID-19 website](#) and [VDH COVID-19 website](#) for the most current information or contact your [local health department](#) if you have questions.**

**We thank you for your assistance in helping to prepare for and respond to COVID-19.**

**WHAT IF I HAD CLOSE CONTACT WITH SOMEONE I BELIEVE**

## TO HAVE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)?

- Take your temperature twice a day and remain alert for fever, coughs, or difficulty breathing.
- If you develop a fever, cough, or have difficulty breathing within 14 days it is advised that you should not come to work and see your doctor immediately. It is important to call first. Announce your visit to the doctor's office/hospital and describe that you have been in the affected area or have had contact with a sick person and have corresponding symptoms (e.g. fever).
- It is requested that you self-isolate pending further instructions from medical professionals.
- For further guidance, see the [CDC page](#) Interim US Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Persons with Potential COVID-19 Exposure in Travel-associated or Community Settings.

Should a case be positively identified, appropriate communications as guided by the Virginia Department of Health will occur. Administrators will work with faculty to make accommodations for extended student absences.

The Office of Catholic Schools will continue to monitor recommendations and information from the CDC and make necessary changes based on updated information.

*The primary goal of this newsletter is information sharing among professionals regarding health issues that may impact our communities.*

Amber Dise, MSN, RN, CRRN

Diocesan School Health Coordinator

[amber.dise@arlingtondiocese.org](mailto:amber.dise@arlingtondiocese.org)

703.498.7684

STAY CONNECTED

