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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) IN MCPHERSON COUNTY

McPherson County continues to have an uptake in coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases. If you are notified by the Health Department of being a contact of someone who is positive for COVID-19, you **MUST** quarantine at home for 14 days. This means that a negative test will not return an exposed person to work/sports/daycare/etc. sooner than 14 days. If you are a contact, decide to be tested, and it comes back negative, you **STILL** have to finish your 14-day period because you may become contagious anytime during the rest of the 14 days. We do **NOT** routinely recommend testing contacts unless symptoms arise or a high risk individual is involved. People who have not had direct exposure to someone with COVID-19 do not need to quarantine and are not excluded from work/sports/daycare/etc.

If you are being tested for COVID-19, you are considered a Person Under Investigation (PUI). The PUI **MUST** isolate while waiting on results. The PUI should isolate away from anyone in their household. If they are not able to isolate away from the household members by staying in their own room, the entire household must quarantine while awaiting results to reduce exposure.

If a person in quarantine does not develop any COVID-19 symptoms, then they are released from quarantine at the end of 14 days. If symptoms do develop during those 14 days, the person is to contact their primary provider for further evaluation and/or testing. People who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 may be released from isolation at the direction of the Health Department when it has been 10 days since the onset of symptoms **AND** 72 hours since symptoms have resolved. This symptom-based method of returning people to work is preferred to a testing-based method of returning people to work because tests can still remain positive long after the virus is no longer active.

McPherson County Health Department reports 160 total confirmed cases of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in McPherson County. 142 of the total confirmed cases have now met recovery guidelines set forth by the KDHE. There are zero current hospitalizations and one death.

KDHE and MCHD continue to mandate a 14-day home quarantine for Kansans if you have done any of the following:

- Attended/traveled to a mass gathering event (out-of-state) of 500 people or greater on or after August 11.
- Traveled to:
  - Florida between June 29 – August 11.
- Traveled on a cruise ship or river cruise.
- Traveled internationally on or after July 14 to countries with a CDC Level 3 Travel Health Notice, including China, Iran, European Schengen area, United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland and Brazil. International travelers must follow [CDC guidance and protocols](#).

McPherson County is in Phase 3 of Reopening Kansas. Updated documents can be found on [mcpersoncountyks.us](#) on the home page, under "COVID-19: Reopening McPherson County." McPherson County Health Department recommends McPherson County remains in Phase 3 at least until August 17th, 2020. This decision extends Phase 3 by two incubation periods and is based off the number of positive cases with unknown exposure and the continuous increase in new cases. Extending it by four weeks instead of two will allow businesses and communities to plan for additional precautions beyond a two-week interval. The Health Department constantly assesses the presence of COVID-19 in McPherson County and our recommendations reflect the data we collect.

McPherson County Board of Health (County Commissioners) passed a resolution to opt out of Governor Kelly's Executive Order 20-52 on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020. McPherson County Board of Health recommends the McPherson County communities still follow the recommendations from McPherson County Health Department and McPherson County Health Officer, which includes wearing face masks while in public when 6-foot of distance cannot be maintained between individuals. Mask wearing can and will significantly decrease the amount of COVID-19 spread in our communities, both from asymptomatic and symptomatic individuals.

McPherson County residents are encouraged to help slow the spread of coronavirus by:

- Following Phase 3 of Reopening Kansas and McPherson County ([mcpersoncountyks.us](#)).
- Maintaining social distancing.
- Avoiding gatherings in groups greater than 45-persons.
- Wearing cloth face coverings or homemade masks when in public.
- Practicing cough etiquette and washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

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