

March 12, 2020

## **Memorandum**

**To:** Residents of Pershing County

**Re:** Pershing County Planning and Response for COVID-19 Preparedness

**Purpose:** To provide information and awareness regarding our community and county efforts to prepare and manage potential Coronavirus infections

A Local Emergency Planning Commission (LEPC) meeting was called and held today in response to this issue. Representatives from our local Emergency Medical System, Community Health Nursing, State Public and Behavioral Health, law enforcement, the school district, Frontier Community Coalition, and Pershing General Hospital, Clinic, and Skilled Nursing Facility met with a County Commissioner for this meeting today. I participated in this meeting today as County Health Officer.

The COVID-19 pandemic is being closely monitored by local, state, and government health officials. Pershing General Hospital and Clinic are responding to this potential health risk, and we have supplies to test for COVID-19 if and when it is needed. Our county has NOT had a case of COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 to date.

Our hospital and nursing home implemented a new visitor policy in an effort to reduce risk of transmission of possible COVID-19 or other respiratory viruses like influenza. NO visitors under 12 years of age will be allowed to visit. See Pershing General Hospital & Nursing Home Facebook page for details.

Patients who have respiratory symptoms are advised to call the clinic or emergency room **prior** to arrival in order to be screened and appropriately directed for care.

Pershing County schools are operating as usual. There is an emergency plan in place for our schools in the event we have a COVID-19 infection in our community.

After our meeting today, all parties are in agreement that any non-essential meetings be postponed for 30 days or be conducted by teleconference or Zoom video conference.

Our local law enforcement and EMS are appropriately prepared to respond to potential situations involving infectious disease and transport.

Many of our essential operations in the community require staff in numbers that are already limited. It is important to do the best we can to prevent illness and the spread of infectious disease.

**\*Proper hygiene is the best defense against the COVID-19 virus and all viruses.**

- \*Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- \*Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- \*Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- \*Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze.
- \*Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces including work areas

We will continue to monitor the situation closely and give updates periodically as more information is available.

Kamin VanGuilder, MD, Pershing County Health Officer