



West Virginia State Medical Association

Talking Points
COVID
March 16, 2020

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Emergency officials continue to coordinate efforts to address the possible spread of COVID-19, the Coronavirus.

The Kanawha-Charleston Health Department has a hotline. Call 304-348-1088 with questions. It is staffed 24 hours a day.

Testing is still of paramount importance in Charleston and Kanawha County. As of Monday morning, 41 people had been tested: 38 were negative; three tests are pending.

To be tested, an individual must have a fever greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit; coughing, shortness of breath and have traveled to an identified area of outbreak.

We are asking those who have traveled to self-quarantine for 14 days. We are monitoring their progress. Testing is a two-part process. The first, fairly simple part, is swabbing the nose and mouth. The second part of the test must be done at an accredited laboratory. Unlike some tests, the results are not immediate. The wait is at least 24 hours from the West Virginia Office of Laboratory Services. Because of the national backlog, results from commercial laboratories are taking as long as seven days.

Officials are working with nursing homes, hospitals and personal care homes to ensure they have the supplies they need. These facilities have in place emergency plans that they are implementing.

These facilities may, for instance, limit the number of individuals who can visit a patient and check your temperature before you are admitted.

There are no plans to close public facilities like restaurants. However, congregating in any place with more than 50 people (maybe as few as 10 according to late Wednesday afternoon reports) is not encouraged. Have food delivered. Order take out.

We are not diminishing the fact some people may be ill and not test positive for Coronavirus. We are still in flu season; seasonal allergies are flaring. Contact your health care provider if you have any illness where you are not comfortable treating it with rest and over-the-counter medications.