February 28, 2020

Alabama prepares for possible arrival of novel coronavirus COVID-19

MOBILE, Alabama — The Mobile County Health Department (MCHD) and the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) assures the public that as of today there are no known cases of the new coronavirus COVID-19 reported in the state. MCHD and ADPH are working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other partners in preparing Alabama communities for the possible spread of COVID-19.

“We are on daily calls with the CDC, as are local hospitals,” said Dr. Bernard H. Eichold II, Health Officer for Mobile County. “Prevention via hand washing and not traveling to infected areas is recommended. There is no vaccines or antiviral prescription for this illness at this time.”

Interim guidance has been sent to the state’s post-secondary schools, the State Department of Education, independent schools and businesses based on the most recent information. ADPH conducted a webinar to assist hospitals by providing screening guidance and other precautions for staff and the public.

The ADPH Center for Emergency Preparedness coordinates with multiple agencies and partners related to staff education and readiness. Most frontline hospitals are prepared, and staff are trained to do isolation and evaluation of persons with respiratory illnesses such as COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. Hospitals are required to keep enough personal protective equipment to ensure that there is no transmission of infectious disease within their facilities for up to 72 hours, and hospitals are currently notified in advance that their facility is the hospital of choice for the person being monitored. Processes are in place for coordination of patient care and transportation.

While there are no known cases of COVID-19 in Alabama, there are several types of common respiratory viruses circulating including common coronavirus types and influenza. Since current respiratory outbreaks could make it hard to identify an outbreak of this new coronavirus, the public is asked to get flu vaccine if they have not done so.

“Do 10 – Fight the Flu” describes the top 10 things to do to fight the flu and avoid infection that also apply to COVID-19. Recommendations are as follows: 1) Get vaccinated; 2) Wash your hands; 3) Cover your coughs and sneezes; 4) Stay home with fever; 5) Stockpile supplies; 6) Clean and disinfect; 7) Know your office emergency plan; 8) Learn home care; 9) Call your doctor if symptoms get worse; and 10) Stay informed

More information is available by clicking “Coronavirus” on the home page of https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/