

January 31, 2020

Dear local education agency,

As you are likely aware, cases of a new virus that causes respiratory illness in people, now known as 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), have been reported in China, and since December 2019, additional cases have been identified in a growing number of countries. The District of Columbia Department of Health (DC Health) is monitoring the situation closely and participating in national calls with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We are providing the most updated guidance to the DC healthcare community via Health Notices and ensuring that providers know how to reach the DC Health disease investigation team if there is a clinical concern. While the CDC believes the risk to the American public remains low at this time, we are making sure that DC is prepared if a case is identified in the District.

At this time, there is no change in our guidance to local education agencies, as there have been no cases in DC, and it has not been found to be spreading in the community in the United States. We encourage you to follow your routine sick policies, and suggest that it includes exclusion of children who have had a fever for 24 hours. While it is not directly related, encouraging students to get a flu shot can help to prevent illness during this time of year. DC Health is actively monitoring the situation and will keep the local education agencies updated if anything changes.

The top priority for DC Health is always the health and safety of DC residents and visitors. You can find updated information about 2019-nCoV, local surveillance data, and answers to frequently asked questions on our website at <https://dchealth.dc.gov/coronavirus>.

Sincerely,



LaQuandra S. Nesbitt, MD, MPH
Director