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For Immediate Release

Monongalia County has its first diagnosed case of COVID-19

MORGANTOWN, WV (March 19, 2020) — Monongalia County has its first diagnosed case of COVID-19, Dr. Lee B. Smith announced Thursday evening.

“We knew it was just a matter of time before we would hear this news,” said Dr. Smith, MCHD executive director and county health officer. “As testing expands, this will happen. People shouldn’t panic. Instead, they should take commonsense measures that will keep them and their community safe.”

Everyone who can work from home should take advantage of this opportunity, only making trips outside for essential errands.

“We also want to make it clear that anyone who is waiting for COVID-19 test results should remain self-quarantined,” Dr. Smith said. “That also means you should not use getting tested as a reason to run errands or visit a local store. Please go directly to the testing location and return home immediately after.”

Other measures that individuals should follow including social distancing, or remaining a safe distance from other people. Dr. Smith recommends 6 feet.

Also, wash hands often, with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds, or the same amount of time it takes to sing the chorus to “Take Me Home, Country Roads.” Cover coughs and sneezes, get plenty of sleep and do your best to remain healthy. Do not go to work or outside if you are sick, even with a common cold.

There are no additional details about the COVID-19 case in Monongalia County at this time. West Virginia was the last state in the U.S. to announce a positive case, on Tuesday. As of Wednesday, the state Department of Health and Human Resources has announced

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two positive cases, 143 negative cases and three pending. Results hadn't been updated for Thursday as of 9 p.m.

COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that emerged from China in December 2019. Symptoms include shortness of breath, a dry cough and a fever. As of Thursday, there were 10,442 cases in the United States and 150 deaths. Worldwide, there were 242,714 cases and 9,867 deaths. Italy just surpassed China with the total number of deaths: 3,405. China, which reported no new cases on Thursday, has reported 3,130 deaths so far.

WVU Medicine has established drive-through testing in Morgantown and four other West Virginia cities for individuals who have been pre-screened. Questions about COVID-19 should be directed to the state COVID-19 hotline, 1-800-887-4304. Anyone with questions about testing or symptoms should call WVU Medicine at 304-598-6000 option #4 or Mon Health System at 304-285-3798.

For more information about COVID-19, including links to the websites of the DHHR, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as local updates, go to monchd.org/covid-19.html. Also get updates @wvmchd on Facebook and Twitter and wvmchd on Instagram.