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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 27, 2020

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Residents Encouraged to Do Their Part to Stop the Spread – Social Distancing Explained

In a coordinated effort to contain the ever evolving spread of COVID-19, residents are encouraged to social distance themselves for the foreseeable future. Washington County Hospital and Clinics, the City of Washington, Washington County Public Health, Washington County Emergency Management, City of Washington Police Department, and the Washington County Sheriff's office urge citizens to do their part and follow recommendations issued from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention.

Why Social Distancing?

Social Distancing means to limit contact with others and to keep at least 6 feet between individuals to prevent the spread of germs. These recommendations are voluntary and though many steps have been taken – closure of schools, libraries, places of worship, restaurants and bars – residents need to do their part to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and other viral illnesses.

For those low-risk and healthy individuals it is just as important for you to maintain social distancing. Though you may feel well, you can prevent infection to our most vulnerable, the elderly and anyone with compromised immune systems. Asymptomatic individuals could potentially spread a virus and propel the disease through the population. Staying home to protect the most vulnerable and yourself is the right thing to do.

What You Should Do

Doing your part is simple: Reduce unnecessary trips out of the house and avoid highly trafficked areas. If it necessary to leave your home to seek medical care, get groceries, or to perform work, maintain a safe distance of at least six feet from others to prevent contact, do not shake hands, and be sure to practice good hygiene. Continue to follow the recommended precautions including:

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- **Stay home if you feel ill**, except to seek medical care. Call ahead to determine if you need to be seen in a clinic setting and/or the best location to be seen.
- **Clean your hands often with soap and warm water for 20 seconds**. If soap is not available, use a hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.**
- **Avoid close contact** and avoid gatherings of 10 people or more. In any situation, follow social distancing recommendations.
- **Cover coughs and sneezes** – use a tissue or the inside of your elbow.
- **Clean and disinfect frequently** touched surfaces daily.

For general questions or information on COVID-19, WCHC encourages the public to call 211 or visit, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> or <https://idph.iowa.gov/emerging-health-issues/novel-coronavirus>.

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