

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wilmette Community Leaders Focus on Prevention, Preparedness and Communication in Response to Coronavirus

WILMETTE, IL. – (March 5, 2020) - As concern about coronavirus (COVID-19) grows, Wilmette community partners are working together to prepare, educate and protect the community.

A diverse group of leaders representing government, including health and public safety, along with educational institutions, gathered at the Village's Police Department on March 3 to discuss the current state of the coronavirus, preventative measures being taken by local organizations, response plans and how to best coordinate efforts.

The goal of this collaborative effort is to enhance the safety of those who live, work, visit and attend schools in our community.

"While we are fortunate that there are no reported cases of the coronavirus in the Village of Wilmette, we as community partners are collaborating to serve the community in the event of an outbreak and want to provide information that will help the public remain calm, stay informed and be prepared," said Village Manager Michael Braiman.

The group agreed on three key priorities to focus on: prevention, preparedness and communication.

Prevention

Each organization is increasing sanitization and cleaning efforts at their respective locations. Organizations are also reviewing policies around when employees/students should stay home if sick and are taking steps to prepare for remote work as necessary. Meanwhile, individuals can help prevent the spread of coronavirus by taking these steps:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol;
- Stay home when you are sick and do not return to work or school for at least 24 hours after a fever breaks and while upper respiratory symptoms such as a cough, sneezing and runny nose persist;
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, including shaking hands;
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, and
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects such as cell phones

For the general Wilmette public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low. Taking the steps outlined above will help to limit potential future spread of the virus.

Preparedness

Each agency has emergency preparedness and response plans and are reviewing and taking steps in accordance with those plans. Local leaders will continue to host these high-level coordination meetings, share timely and relevant information and are prepared to ramp up the community response should the virus begin to spread within the region.

Participating community partners include:

- Village of Wilmette
 - Wilmette Police Dept.
 - Wilmette Fire Dept.
- New Trier High School
- Wilmette School District 39
- Avoca School District 37
- Wilmette Park District
- Wilmette Public Library
- Loyola Academy
- Regina Dominican HS
- Baker Demonstration School
- St. Francis Xavier School
- St. Joseph School

Local agencies continue to work closely with regional, state and federal officials to ensure a cohesive response to this public health concern.

Residents should also review their personal emergency plans—similar to preparing for a snowstorm—and consider maintaining a two-week supply of water and food and an adequate supply of medicine. Visit FEMA's [ready.gov/pandemic](https://www.ready.gov/pandemic) for tips.

Communication

As the safety and well-being of the community is the top priority, Wilmette's community partners are committed to clear and open communication with residents and stakeholders to enhance their safety. The group will be taking steps to reach out to other community organizations, including religious institutions, non-profits and local businesses.

Below are several trusted sources of information about Coronavirus:

- [Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](https://www.cdc.gov)
- [Illinois Department of Public Health \(IDPH\)](https://www.idph.state.il.us)
- [Cook County Department of Public Health](https://www.cookcountyhealth.org)
- [City of Chicago Public Health](https://www.cityofchicago.org)

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