For Immediate Release

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Buckhannon-Upshur Partners Fortify Partnerships as Upshur County Receives First Positive-Confirmed COVID-19 Test Result

BUCKHANNON – The Buckhannon-Upshur COVID-19 Community Task Force met via web conference on Friday, March 27, 2020, to continue planning the county’s response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Upshur County received its first positive-confirmed test result on Thursday, March 26. The Upshur-Buckhannon Health Department is coordinating with the appropriate local and state partners on the investigation. The health department also continues to follow CDC guidelines and to share information from the CDC and WVDHHR with local partners regularly.

Even with a positive result in the county, local leaders want to reassure residents they should not panic. Response and other infection control measures that began weeks ago remain in place, and medical and public health services are available in Buckhannon and Upshur County.

According to the CDC, COVID-19 symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure, and include:
- Fever,
- Cough, and
- Shortness of breath.

Medical providers are seeing patients and testing cases if patients meet prescribed criteria. The Upshur-Buckhannon Health Department and the Upshur County Department of Homeland Security continue to request personal protective equipment from state authorities, and they distribute received equipment to hospitals, clinics, first responders, etc. as directed by state authorities.

St. Joseph’s Hospital maintains a Triage Nurse’s Line at 304-473-2161 from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, for community questions. Community Care of West Virginia runs a pandemic triage line from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m, Monday through Friday, at 304-471-2240, also for community questions.
Upshur Countians should practice good hand hygiene with soap and water for 20 seconds, or with alcohol-based hand sanitizers that contain at least 60% alcohol. Residents should also follow the Governor’s “stay at home” order (see https://governor.wv.gov/pages/default.aspx#homeorder for more information).

Please limit trips out to the extent possible. Local partners recommend planning for weekly supplies or grocery trips, and when making those trips, residents should follow social distancing recommendations by allowing six feet of space between persons. Further, to the extent possible, limit access into grocery stores, pharmacies, etc. to one person per family or group. Check with your neighbors to see if one person on your block can make a single trip for supplies for several households.

Many services remain available to local residents. St. Joseph’s Hospital’s provider clinics and emergency department remain open. St. Joseph’s maintains its triage tent outside of the hospital to screen patients upon entry. Similarly, Community Care continues to offer both symptomatic and asymptomatic sites. Main Street Buckhannon and the Tri-County Health Center in Rock Cave are the preferred sites for those not exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms. The Care Express location in the North Ridge Plaza near Buffalo Wild Wings and a separate section at the Tri-County Health Center are the preferred sites for patients with symptoms.

Community Care is also triaging patients by phone and on-site at its locations. CCWV encourages Telehealth visits and its mail-order pharmacy service to support social distancing measures and keep patients at home. Additionally, CCWV can offer curb-side pharmacy services.

Both the Upshur County Commission and the City of Buckhannon would like to remind residents that both the county offices and city hall remain closed. Essential services provided by both governmental entities remain operational. Visit http://www.upshurcounty.org/alert_detail.php and http://buckhannonwv.org/covid-19/ for additional information on accessing county and city services.

The COVID-19 pandemic response is a fluid situation, and the task force will continue to meet regularly.

Local authorities continue to stress the need for residents to seek information from trusted, reliable sources. Those sources include the CDC (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html) and WVDHHR (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx) websites, which contain updated information about the COVID-19 virus. Governor Jim Justice’s website contains information about the state’s response: https://governor.wv.gov/Pages/default.aspx.

Partner agencies such as St. Joseph’s Hospital, Upshur-Buckhannon Health Department, Upshur County Schools, the City of Buckhannon, and the Upshur County Commission will also continue to release details specific to their programs and operations through various local media outlets.
The Buckhannon-Upshur COVID-19 Community Task Force is a coalition of stakeholders representing the health department, medical providers, the county and city governments, as well as emergency response agencies, educational providers, social services agencies, and civic organizations. The task force also includes representatives from daycare centers, public housing authorities, nursing homes, etc.