

Date: March 2, 2020

To: Pima County Employees

From: Bob England MD, MPH, Director  
Health Department

**Re: What County employees need to know about COVID-19**

I want to share my perspective with you as we enter the next phase of dealing with the new Coronavirus outbreak, COVID-19. Based upon what we know about this virus so far, it looks like the greatest risk from this new Coronavirus could be our own overreaction. Here's what we know so far:

This virus is quite contagious. The vast majority of infections are mild – sometimes asymptomatic – and not typically lethal (deadly). The real-world impact of COVID-19 when widespread, will look something like a bad flu season. Two years ago, we lost an estimated 80,000 Americans to the flu (meaning probably more than 200 here in Pima County). COVID-19 is most dangerous for many of the same people who are most at risk for the flu: older adults and those with chronic diseases such as heart disease, lung disease, and diabetes.

Every flu season, a very small percent of people may get very sick, so sick that it endangers their lives. But we don't close schools, shutter businesses, or cancel events because of the flu. Doing so will only cause severe economic and social disruption beyond what we will already experience.

Instead, we should ramp up our education on simple ways to stay healthy this time of year:

- Wash your hands, frequently
- Keep your hands away from your face
- Avoid sick people
- Stay home if you're sick

Be prepared for changes as the situation evolves. Additionally, as a government and as individuals, we should stop saying and doing things that falsely communicate this is a dire emergency. For up-to-date information about COVID-19 in our community for yourself or the public, visit the [Health Department's Coronavirus information page](#).

Keep an eye on your County email. If we have anything important to tell you about the virus, we'll send it to you via eBlast. You should also sign up for emergency alerts with the County's emergency notification system ([www.emergencyalerts.pima.gov](http://www.emergencyalerts.pima.gov)) and be sure your personal contact information is up-to-date in ADP. [See this page for more information about how to sign up](#).

Take care of yourselves as we go through this. Use the same practices we do each cold and flu season, paying a little more attention than most years, and as always, **please stay home if you're sick**.

#AlertNotAnxious