



# EAST-CENTRAL DISTRICT Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[Columbus, NE] – East Central District Health Department (ECDHD) has identified 68 new cases of COVID-19 in its jurisdiction, bringing the total case number across the four-county area to 288. At this time, cases per county are:

- Boone: 1
- Colfax: 130
- Nance: 2
- Platte: 155

Two of the newly identified cases are staff from Brookstone Acres, a skilled nursing and rehabilitation facility in Columbus. One of the staff members had been off work for several days before symptoms began. Brookstone Acres is working closely with ECDHD to monitor this situation. All of the contact tracing for these two cases has been completed. Contact tracing continues for the other 66 new cases referenced above.

As part of the effort to increase the speed of contact tracing, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NE DHHS) has assigned a contact tracing team to ECDHD. The full team, 30 people plus a NE DHHS Lead, will begin to assist with case investigations and contact tracing next week. A partial team started work at ECDHD on Friday, May 1.

The ECDHD four-county district is seeing a rapid rise in the number of COVID-19 cases, and some of these are community spread cases. Community spread means that persons should assume they could be infected with the virus anywhere. For that reason, and despite the relaxation of Directed Health Measures scheduled for May 4<sup>th</sup>, ECDHD urges residents of its communities to continue to stay the course of social distancing by:

- Limiting non-essential errands. Shop alone, not with children or other household members.
- Wearing a face-covering whenever they leave their homes.
- Working from home if possible.

- Frequently washing their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with soap and water, or if soap and water is not available, by using a hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol.
- Keeping a minimum of 6 ft. distance between persons whenever possible.

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