

**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

March 20, 2020

## **Health Department Activates Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) in Response to COVID-19**

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN – The Hamilton County Health Department has been notified of additional positive cases of COVID-19, bringing the total case count to eight. Of the two cases reported yesterday, one is a contact to a previous case and is isolated at home. Another has a history of international travel and is isolated at home. Today, three cases were reported to the Health Department and these investigations are just beginning. Health Department staff are working to identify and notify close contacts.

Since the Health Department began responding to COVID-19, they have been shifting resources to address this pandemic. To meet this need, they have fully activated their Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). The COOP plan ensures that essential services remain available to the public, while some programs are temporarily suspended. The Health Department would like to inform the public of what services are currently available and which have been suspended.

The essential services are as follows:

- Vital Records (Permits and Birth and Death Certificates)
- Sexually Transmitted Infection Testing and Treatment
- Tuberculosis Control Activities
- Required Immunizations and Post Exposure Tetanus
- WIC – Now Provided via Phone Calls
- Family Planning Services – Limited Services
- Homeless Health Care Center – Primary Care and Sick Care
- Emergency Dental Care
- Environmental Services - Foodborne Outbreak Response and Rabies Testing
- Breastfeeding Support
- Pediatric Lead Testing of Suspected Elevations

The programs that are suspended are as follows:

- Home Visits/Community Outreach
- Community Meetings
- Routine Restaurant Inspections
- Preventative Dental Services
- Well Child Physical Exams
- Car Seat Program

(over)

“Our COOP plan allows us to redirect even more resources toward slowing the spread of the disease in our community,” says Becky Barnes, Health Department Administrator, “It also reduces the number of face-to-face interactions between our staff and clients.”

The Health Department’s satellite campuses (Ooltewah, Sequoyah, Birchwood, and the Homeless Healthcare Center) remain open, however, not all services are being provided at all sites. Clients should contact clinics to see if the service is being provided at that particular site.

Clients currently scheduled for a suspended service will be contacted for rescheduling. Anyone with questions about their existing appointments or other Health Department services is urged to call that service directly using the clinic/department phone number on the [website](#).

Other protective measures at the Health Department include:

- Upon arrival, visitors and staff will have their temperature taken.
- To maintain social distancing, clients are asked to come alone or with one other person for support. In the case of children, please limit to one parent.

The Health Department asks for your patience and understanding during the COVID-19 pandemic response.

For COVID-19 questions, please call the hotline at 423-209-8383, or visit the website at [health.hamiltontn.gov](http://health.hamiltontn.gov).

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