



Randall Hutto
County Mayor
Wilson County Government

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Re: Wilson County Coronavirus COVID-19 Update of 3/18/2020

UPDATE 3/18/2020 News release from Wilson County Office of Mayor Randall Hutto (cases confirmed in TDOH database as of 2:00pm 3/19/2020)

(Lebanon, TN 3/18/2020)- Mayor Hutto called a meeting today of the Wilson County Board of Health and other stakeholders to assess where we have been and where we're going regarding COVID-19 prevention and response. The following people participated in the meeting. Wilson County Board of Health Members-Wilson County Mayor Randall Hutto; Director of Wilson County Schools, Donna Wright; Director of Schools, LSSD, Scott Benson; Serenity Dental DMD, Teresa Larkins; Gibbs Pharmacy DPH, Byron Pirtle; Chairman of BOH, Dr. Wayne Wells; and WEMA Director, Joey Cooper; WEMA EMS Chief Brian Newberry; TEMA Andrew Bates; TN Department of Health Olivia Spooner; Mid-Cumberland TDOH Regional Director, Sanjuana Stamm; Wilson County Health Department, Director Tim Diffenderfer; Wilson County Health Department Nursing Supervisory, Darlene Brown; Wilson County Health Department, Donita Woodall; and Vanderbilt Wilson County Hospital CEO, Jay Hinesley. Wilson County is working closely with the Tennessee Department of Health (TDOH) to stay informed and to reduce spread of the coronavirus COVID-19. The TDOH is in contact with the CDC and other agencies for timely guidance to protect the health of Tennesseans. COVID-19 is the specific strain of coronavirus that presents a health risk to the public as it spreads worldwide. To prevent and reduce spread of the virus, many local businesses and services are following CDC guidance to close or restrict public access and continue to provide much needed services through drive-throughs, phone and internet ordering, and delivery services where available.

Cases Reported (March 19, 2020)

154 cases of positive COVID-19 virus have been confirmed in Tennessee as of 2PM on March 19, 2020 and 1 positive case has been confirmed by the CDC and recorded in the TDOH database for people who live in Wilson County. TDOH updates the confirmed cases at 2:00PM daily on their site at <https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov.html>. The incidences are reported to the TN Department of Health by healthcare providers and testing labs. People may hear of cases of coronavirus, but until it is confirmed by the CDC and then published in the TDOH database, we will not report it because the case may be for someone who lives in another county, or it could be a strain of coronavirus other than the highly contagious COVID-19. We will confirm and update on what the TDOH reports as confirmed for our county.

County Actions

Wilson County government is taking action to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among county residents. County employees will be at work to provide the services needed by county residents for health, safety and welfare. The Courthouse building will be closed to the public as will most other county buildings; however, residents can access services by phone, by internet, by drop-boxes and by all means available which minimize person to person contact. Direct meetings will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the department providing the service. Refer to the Wilson County Government website for department phone numbers at <https://www.wilsoncountyttn.gov/>.

Wilson Emergency Management Agency (WEMA) Director Joey Cooper stated, “The response to the COVID-19 pandemic will be a long one. We are asking everyone to take appropriate actions to prepare you and your family by social distancing.”

“Our response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 disease must be fast, and we are counting on everyone to be proactive in helping us to protect fellow Wilson Countians. Mitigation of the fast rate of the spread will flatten the curve and help us in keeping the numbers of infected below our healthcare capacities.”

Wilson County Emergency Management Director Joey Cooper stated that the Agency has been in contact with the Federal and State Emergency Management officials, along with the Tennessee Department of Health, Local Hospitals, and City and County Officials. “We have conducted meetings with Federal and State emergency management officials, the Tennessee Department of Health, local hospitals, City and County officials to share information being obtained by our Agency.”

Director Cooper stated that he’s incredibly proud of the teamwork of everyone involved in the immense task of keeping everyone safe and informed.

WEMA EMS Chief Brian Newberry stated that the Agency’s crews are following CDC guidelines on screening patients with COVID-19 related illnesses. Callers will also be asked questions related to COVID-19 by dispatchers. “We are limiting the number of providers that make patient contact so that the risk of exposure to our staff is as limited as possible. Chief Newberry asked the public to only call an ambulance for “emergencies” to minimize impact on the Emergency Medical Systems and hospital Emergency Rooms. “Before calling an ambulance for COVID-19 related symptoms, the patient should call their Primary Care Physician or the Tennessee Department of Health information hotline at 1-877-857-2945 which is available from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Central Time each day.”

Wilson County Health Department follows the protocols of the TN Department of Health. The county health department is helping WIC families with continuity of service. People can reach the health department by calling 615-444-5325 or by driving up to the facility located at 927 East Baddour Parkway, Lebanon, TN 37087.

Individual Action

Continue to follow normal best health practices to protect yourself and others from spreading any viruses:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue when sneezing or coughing, then throw the tissue away.
- Don't touch your face.
- Stay home if you are sick (to get well and to avoid spreading a virus)
- Stay away from people who are sick—stay in a room with doors closed while you are resting. If you are a caretaker, follow all the aforementioned tips.
- Call your doctor/healthcare provider if you have any concern about your health. Or call a walk-in clinic if you do not have a primary care doctor. Your provider will assess your symptoms and determine if testing is required. The healthcare provider will guide your next steps.
- Keep your distance. Give yourself 6 feet between yourself and another person. This disease does not transmit through the air—it transmits through droplets of a sneeze or cough. A little distance helps a lot in this case!
- Reduce contact with others. Greet people with an elbow bump. No need for handshakes to warmly greet a friend or colleague!

People at Risk

People who are over the age of 60, or have serious medical conditions are at higher risk than the general population. Those who have travelled to or come in contact with people who have recently traveled to China, Iran, Italy, or S. Korea, may be at higher risk of getting the virus. However, not everyone who gets sick will have serious illness. If you have symptoms, call your doctor or primary healthcare provider.

Treatment

Call your healthcare provider if you are sick. Your healthcare provider will assess your symptoms and will determine if you need to be tested. Several test sites are available in Wilson County and you will be guided where to go.

Request from WEMA Director Joey Cooper

WEMA Director Cooper made an important request to the public: “We would make one specific request, and that is: We would urge construction companies, organizations, etc. to donate their inventory of N95 masks, half face respirators and cartridges, and Tyvek Suits to your County Fire Department and forego additional orders of those industrial masks. Those industrial masks that they use on construction sites are perfectly acceptable for healthcare workers to be protected from a respiratory disease.”

To keep our communications center from being overwhelmed with calls to donate, Director Cooper asked those that have N95 masks, respirators, and Tyvek suits to fill out the following form and we would be in contact with them for a pick-up time and location.

Link to the donation form: <https://forms.gle/W69v8ArhoTvVF6gi8>

For more information:

HOTLINE: The TN Department of Health has launched a **hotline** for TN Coronavirus Public Information available 10:00AM-10:00PM at **877-857-2945**.

Information and resources specific to Wilson County can be found on the Wilson County EMA website at www.wilsonema.com/covid19.

The TN Department of Health updates their COVID-19 website daily at <https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov.html>.

For Frequently Asked Questions, go to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faz.html>.

For Travel, go to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/faqs.html>.

For TDH news releases, go to www.tn.gov/health/news.html.

Office of Communications & Media, TN Dept. of Health, Shelley Walker, 615-253-5184.
In Wilson County, if you have concerns, call Mayor Hutto's office at 615-444-1383 or the County Health Department Director Tim Diffenderfer at 615-444-5325.

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