FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

State of Iowa Announces Change to Close Contact Definition

CLAYTON COUNTY, IA – On September 29, 2020, Governor Reynolds announced a change in the definition the State of Iowa is using to define close contacts for the purposes of contact tracing of positive COVID-19 cases. The CDC, or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, defines close contacts as **persons within 6 feet of each other for 15 minutes or longer** regardless of mask use. Today the State of Iowa announced that if both individuals are wearing masks in non-residential or non-healthcare settings, regardless of distance or duration, they are not considered close contacts.

Clayton County Board of Health continues to strongly encourage everyone maintain physical distancing of six feet between others, regardless of mask use. Layered approaches to preventing COVID-19 transmission are important, and include physical distancing by staying at least six feet away from others, wearing a mask, staying home when ill, washing hands frequently, use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available, and covering coughs and sneezes.

Masks are a simple and effective tool in reducing the spread of COVID-19 when combined with prevention measures and physical distancing but must be worn correctly and consistently to help slow the spread of COVID-19. Masks should be worn in public settings and when around people who do not live in your household.

**When wearing a mask:**
- Wear masks with two or more layers
- Wear the mask over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Fits snugly against the sides of your face
- Masks should be worn by people two years and older
- Masks should NOT be worn by children younger than two, people who have trouble breathing, or people who cannot remove the mask without assistance
- Make sure you can breathe through it
- Wear it whenever you go out in public
- Wash after using

Additional information can be found on the [Iowa Department of Public Health](https://idph.io) (IDPH) and [COVID-19 in Iowa](https://coronavirus.iowa.gov) websites.

Questions regarding the close contact definition should be directed to the Iowa Department of Public Health.