FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COVID-19: Just a Reminder
By Dr. Michele Dikkers, Chair of Clayton County Board of Health

As the count of cases in the state and county grow, it seems like a good time to review a few things.

Symptoms of COVID-19 are wide ranging. Some may have no symptoms. Others may have many or only one of the following: body aches, sore throat, fevers, headaches, cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste, loss of smell, fatigue, diarrhea and/or congestion.

As fall arrives and school starts, we begin thinking about strep throat, mono, the cold and the flu. Therefore, making a diagnosis may not be as easy as it used to be.

If you think you have any symptoms you should stay home. If symptoms persist after 24 hours, it is important to contact your doctor’s office and discuss the possibility of being tested or making an appointment to be evaluated. Many clinics have made accommodations to keep ill patients and healthy patients safely separated for appointments.

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, there are a few things to remember. Stay at home and take care of yourself. Most people will have mild symptoms and can recover with rest, fluids and over the counter acetaminophen. If you develop shortness of breath or chest pain, call your physician or emergency room. Stay at home, except for medical care. Do not visit public areas, stores or other people. The CDC recommends self-isolating or quarantining in your home for 14 days from onset of symptoms (or from a positive test if you are not having symptoms). While in your home, it is recommended that you avoid and isolate from others in the home to prevent others from becoming ill.

If you have been exposed to someone that has COVID-19, it is recommended that you self-isolate (stay home, do not go to work, stores or to public places) for 14 days from the time of the initial exposure. (Guidelines differ for those who are considered essential workers.)

If you live with someone that has COVID-19 it is best to keep them isolated, in their own space, bedroom, etc. If you are able to do this, the quarantine time for family members exposed, is 14 days from last exposure to that person. If you are unable to isolate the person with COVID-19 from the rest of the household, then the family members that have had contact are instructed to quarantine 14 days AFTER the last day of quarantine for the person that was ill. Yes, that can mean a full 28 days. So, it is important to practice isolation in your home if you can.

Why do we need to quarantine? When a person has been exposed to COVID-19, they are at risk of becoming ill. Quarantining helps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms.

What counts as exposure or close contact? Close contact or exposure is defined as being within six feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more, with or without a mask. It is also defined as providing care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19. Also, direct physical contact counts, such as hugging, kissing, or sharing utensils. Wearing masks, helps decrease the risk of becoming ill when exposed.
We are all responsible for following the guidelines to keep each other well and to help with each other’s recovery through the process.

The fewer cases of COVID-19, the more we can be active and work on getting things back to normal.

So, remember the 3 W’s: Wear a mask, Wash your hands, and Watch your distance. These continue to be true while quarantining or isolating.

Be Well, we are in this together.