FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COVID-19: Be Kind
By Dr. Michele Dikkers, Chair of Clayton County Board of Health

Be Kind
The Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have done unto you. This principle dates back to the time of Confucius, around 500 BC.
Karma: Good intent and good deeds contribute to good outcomes.
Love thy neighbor as thyself.
If you don’t know what to do, be kind.
As of late, many of us have felt conflicted. COVID-19 has left us confused, frustrated, sad and sometimes angry. Remember to reach out to your healthcare provider if you become overwhelmed, anxious or depressed. Don’t avoid making an appointment out of fear of COVID-19, call and a safe appointment can be made for you.

While it is true that there are other coronaviruses, this specific one attacks the human body in ways we have never seen and there is still much to learn. Most coronaviruses attack the upper respiratory system (the nose, sinuses, etc.), this one attacks the lower respiratory system (the lungs) as well as other organ systems of our body.

Epidemiologists are studying this little virus, trying to get to know it better, how it spreads, when it spreads, how contagious is it, can we get it again. Doctors are trying to find out how to treat it. It effects much more than just our lungs, and it infects our lungs in a much more aggressive manner than we have seen with other viruses and bacterias.

Scientists and immunologists are working on developing an immunization to protect us from becoming infected with it.
We have learned that the infection rate of the disease, or the R0 (R naught) has been estimated to be as high as 5.7, meaning that for each person infected, if nothing is done to prevent it, it will be spread to 5.7 other people. This is a high number. The R0 for the “common cold” or influenza is 2 or 3.

How do we drop that number? We do things that will decrease transmission of the disease. What are those things?

- washing hands
- physical distancing
- avoid large crowds
- staying home when we are sick
- wearing masks

The Center for Disease Control and the Iowa Department of Public Health both recommend wearing masks when in public to protect ourselves and others.

This past week, Governor Reynolds has asked Iowans to step up and do the right thing. By wearing a mask and social distancing you are protecting yourself, your family members, your friends and fellow Iowans. The power is ours to slow the spread of COVID-19 while we continue to work toward a cure, effective treatment and a vaccine.

So, remember, when we are scared, frustrated, confused and don’t know what to do, be kind. Treat others the way you want to be treated. Love thy neighbor as thyself. Help each other through this. Wear a mask to protect yourself and those around you, and they will do the same. These are trying times.

Be Kind. We are in this together.

Dr. Michele Dikkers, DO