

## Presentation and questions with Dr. Lisa Costello.

### BACKGROUND

- COVID 19 was first identified in Wuhan, China in December 2019
- West Virginia's website, coronavirus.wv.gov has the latest information on COVID 19. The CDC also has a website devoted to COVID 19 information
- The COVID 19 virus is new. No one has immunity and there are no vaccines
- The virus spreads person-to-person through contact with respiratory droplets from an infected person
- Prevention from the virus is best maintained through washing your hands for at least 20 seconds, using hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, and avoiding touching your face, particularly your eyes, nose and mouth.
- The CDC recently recommended that everyone wear some sort of protective mask or cover over your face when going out in public
- Also recommends physical distancing – keeping at least 6 feet between you and others
- A surge in cases in WV is projected to occur next week (vs an original estimate of sometime in May)
- Factors that make a person more susceptible to COVID 19 include obesity, diabetes, asthma, heart disease and pregnancy
- 80% of people who contract COVID 19 will experience mild symptoms
- Most common symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath. Also, fatigue, muscle aches, sore throat and a runny nose. More recently some have exhibited GI symptoms including vomiting and diarrhea

### The call was then opened up for questions.

Q: What is your opinion on wearing surgical slippers? Would it be beneficial?

A: With PPE, it depends on what type of contact you have with the person. The virus first was transmitted by travel, then from community spread. With close contact for a prolonged period of time, more than 15 minutes, considering the chance for respiratory droplets (suctioning, trachea care), then yes, all available PPE would probably be recommended. With less intensive care, probably not. In Italy, many health care workers were not removing their PPE properly, which contributed to the spread of the virus. You should wash your hands both before and after taking off any PPE. When I performed in-patient care, I did not wear shoe coverings, but I do take off my shoes before entering my house.

### TESTING

- Testing is getting better. Turnaround time has improved from a month ago when it may have taken 8 to 10 days to get test results to now being able to get results, in some cases in 20 hours.
- More facilities are creating their own test kits so there are more available

- Currently the recommendation is not to test asymptomatic people. Rather, the limited supply of tests are given to
  1. The critically ill, those with pre-existing conditions or other risk factors and front-line workers
  2. Those already in the hospital, not in ICU and not in a long-term-care facility
  3. Those in the community

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE - Isolation would be used for those people with active symptoms whereas Quarantine would be used for those who may have been exposed to someone suspected of having COVID 19

### Isolation

- For Isolation, a person showing symptoms should be isolated from asymptomatic people. In a hospital, those showing symptoms are grouped together. A separate bathroom should be used for those with symptoms and the same caregiver(s) should only care for those in isolation to reduce the number of different people being around them.
- For a person with symptoms, if breathing worsens or they exhibit face discoloration or confusion, they may be getting worse and not getting enough oxygen so their physician should be contacted and depending on the severity, should possibly be taken to the hospital
- Visitation should be very limited. Encourage communication through virtual means, if possible. Those with any cognitive or physical disability would have to be handled differently.
- The three criteria for determining whether a person is no longer contagious are:
  1. No fever for at least 72 hours with no medications
  2. Symptoms have improved
  3. It has been at least 7 days since they have exhibited any symptoms. Some people are re-tested, but most are not.
- Anyone who has tested positive for COVID 19 is followed by either the local or County Health Departments

### Quarantine

- For those that suspect they have been exposed, they should self-quarantine.
- They may not exhibit any symptoms; however, they should keep themselves separated from others and try to use a separate bathroom.
- The incubation period is thought to be 14 days, so the quarantine should last at least this long
- The length of time you should quarantine depends on the day you begin to exhibit symptoms or the day you feel may have been exposed.
- If someone begins coughing, you should supply them with a mask or similar face covering
- Remember to wash your hands for 20 seconds frequently and be careful when doing laundry for someone who may be infected. Wash your hands before and after

The call was again opened up for questions.

Q: If a family lives together and one tests positive, should the whole family quarantine?

A: Yes, if they have been in close contact with each other. Try to keep them in their own room. Clean the bathroom after each use. If the exposure was for just a minute, you would probably be ok, but otherwise, yes, quarantine for 14 days.

Q: What is your opinion on homemade masks and those with air filters?

A: I made one for myself out of paper towels. The effectiveness of these masks is still under review. There are many different kinds of masks or face coverings, but the homemade kind would not be for front-line workers. Although, many feel something is better than nothing. Regarding air filters, studies are ongoing. There just is no good data yet, but using a covering with a filter could be better. Face coverings are definitely helpful for not spreading the disease and would prevent people from touching their face. Even surgical masks have some risk, although we may never have zero risk. I would encourage wearing at least a cloth face mask.

Q: From the onset of symptoms, how long does virus last until antibodies develop and virus is gone?

A: Some shed the virus for longer periods than others. The virus has been found in the stool for up to 30 days, but it is not known if it would still cause illness at that point. With the onset of symptoms and up to 2 to 3 days, you most likely shed the virus. They are currently trying to get a test to look only at this particular virus for its antibodies. A person will develop antibodies around day 7. They are still trying to figure out how many antibodies we make and how long we keep them. A person could shed the virus for a couple of weeks, depending on each person's immune system, age and any underlying health conditions.

Q: Any studies on the effectiveness of hydroxychloroquine? My daughter has lupus and just had a baby, and she has taken this drug for years. Do you think it helps?

A: Some reports show that it may help, but it was originally developed for malaria and auto-immune diseases, and there is no consensus. In WV, some have recommended trying it for COVID 19. It fights inflammation and in theory could reduce the shed. If you had an auto-immune disease, it may be beneficial. I would caution against using it without a prescription as it can sometimes cause heart arrhythmias, so it should be closely monitored. The jury is still out. You would want the immune system to fight the virus, but this drug could be used in extreme circumstances. It is not yet FDA approved for treating COVID 19.

Q: I saw on FaceBook that someone created a face mask out of a plastic page protector. Would this work?

A: We have looked at many home-made items. This particular one has not been tested, but it may be better than nothing. We are also looking into sanitizing PPE. But if you do use this item as a facemask, clean it thoroughly in between uses. Again, this particular home-made face protection has not been tested.

Q: What is the definition of shedding?

A: Shedding means being spread or passed by droplets. Not so much all bodily fluids, but rather projecting particles. The virus has been found in the stool but may not be active at that point.

Q: Regarding cloth face masks, how should we take them off, clean and store them?

A: For cloth masks, I would not use them more than one day and wash them in hot water and place them in the dryer. If it gets soiled, I recommend getting another mask. You should wash your hands before and after removing your mask. Start by removing it from one ear and if you are not going to immediately place it in the washing machine, place it in a sealed bag until you can wash it. Limit touching your face as much as possible. When a mask is worn out, throw it away. For the N95 masks, they are looking into ways to decontaminate them. Again, wash your hands before and after removing the mask. And although it is not recommended that you use these more than once, if conditions require it, hang it in a well-ventilated space – possibly outside or in a garage and away from your ventilation system. They are also looking into using UV light to decontaminate these masks. Some services will pick up, clean and return masks. Studies continue on different types of cleaning/decontaminating.

Dr. Costello recommended the National Emerging Special Pathogens Training and Education Center's website at [netec.org](http://netec.org) for information on COVID 19 education and training resources.