

## CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

March 2, 2020

Dear Faith Leader:

Metro Health is taking steps to prevent the introduction and spread of [novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) in our community. The faith community will play an important role in this effort. You can help by sharing the information below:

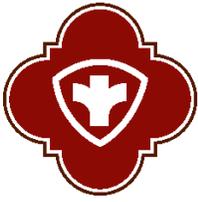
**Maintain perspective.** The United States has seen 16,000 deaths from influenza so far this flu season, compared to 1 from COVID-19 as of this writing. San Antonio has no identified cases of community transmission to date. Among people infected with COVID-19, only 20% become seriously ill.

**Take simple actions to slow the spread of respiratory infections and protect our community members who are at higher risk, such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions.** Stay home when sick, wash your hands often, avoid touching your face, cover your cough with your arm or a tissue, and disinfect surfaces.

**Fight misinformation.** Avoid spreading the stigma that this is a disease limited to one type of people. Know that people released from quarantine or isolation do not pose a risk of infection to other people.

Additional information and guidance for the faith community:

- Be prepared: The information in [this online article](#), for those of us fortunate enough to have homes, is accurate and hits all the key points. Please share the information in it with your congregation and your partners.
- Consider temporarily adapting customs to minimize close personal contact, for example, by finding a substitute for handshakes. Encourage people to keep a personal distance of 3 feet from each other.
- Know the symptoms of novel coronavirus infection: fever (100.4F or more) and a dry cough; not a runny nose, typically. Over time, shortness of breath. Only people who are seriously ill are candidates for COVID-19 testing at this time.
- If a congregant is coughing, other people should keep a distance of 6 feet. In general, people who are sick are advised to stay at home and call their healthcare provider, rather than attend public activities.
- Encourage the vulnerable people you serve to seek out a specific person who will check on and help care for them if they get sick. For people who are homebound, we recommend having on hand a 2-week supply of essential items, including prescription medications. People with special needs can call 2-1-1 to enroll in the [State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry](#).
- Explore using telephone, teleconferencing and other technologies to minister to people who have



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an acute respiratory infection, or who are in [quarantine or isolation](#). Quarantine for COVID-19 typically lasts 14 days, and can create significant emotional and financial stress.

- We are in cold and flu season. COVID-19 symptoms are similar to these more common infections—it is far more likely that anyone with respiratory symptoms is suffering from a cold or flu.
- We know there may be specific situations that arise where you have questions. We will have a hotline in a few days, **210-207-5779**—please call us so we can work together to determine the best course of action.

At this time, we are not making a recommendation to cancel large gatherings or social events. This is a rapidly evolving situation. For ongoing updates and for additional COVID-19 resources, including posters and fact sheets in multiple languages, please visit: [sanantonio.gov/Health/News/Alerts/CoronaVirus](https://sanantonio.gov/Health/News/Alerts/CoronaVirus) and [dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/](https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/).

Thank you for serving our community, and for partnering with us for a healthy San Antonio.

Sincerely,

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San Antonio Metropolitan Health District  
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