



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT, GOVERNOR PRITZKER, PUBLIC HEALTH AND CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE NEW PRESUMPTIVE POSITIVE CASE OF CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019

CHICAGO - Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, Governor JB Pritzker, and officials from Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) announced today a new presumptive positive case of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The patient is a Chicago woman in her 50s who is an employee at Jacqueline B. Vaughn Occupational High School in the Portage Park neighborhood, which will be closed next week out of an abundance of caution. She is currently hospitalized and in stable condition. CDPH and CPS are reaching out individually to connect with all students and their families as well as school employees.

“The City of Chicago has been and will continue working relentlessly to ensure Chicago’s residents, businesses and communities remain safe and informed,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “CPS and CDPH have already begun an extensive outreach effort for every student, employee and family in this school community to inform them of the confirmed case. As we continue to learn more about this first confirmed case in Chicago, we advise residents to be sure to wash their hands, avoid hand to face contact, and take normal health precautions during this flu season.”

The woman was on a cruise, the Grand Princess, and disembarked in San Francisco on Feb. 21 and returned to Chicago on Feb. 24. On March 4, the cruise line first announced that there had been COVID-19 cases associated with the ship. There have now been more than 20 cases from that cruise.

“The state of Illinois is working hand in hand with Mayor Lightfoot and the Chicago Department of Public Health to monitor the situation and provide all resources necessary

to respond,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “We’re working across federal, state, county and city agencies to prepare and respond to this virus and will continue to communicate fully with the public as we move forward.”

After returning to Chicago, the patient initially returned to work, but then stayed home when she started exhibiting symptoms. She was tested for COVID-19 and a presumptive positive diagnosis was returned late Friday afternoon. The test results will have to be confirmed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“Over the coming days we will be assessing students for symptoms and closely monitoring any underlying medical conditions they may have,” said CDPH Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D. “We have been responding to COVID-19 for weeks and have a robust public health process in place with our many federal, state and local partners.”

“Out of an abundance of caution, we are announcing today that CPS will temporarily close Vaughn Occupational High School next week while the City and its health partners conduct a thorough investigation into any possible exposure,” said Dr. Janice K. Jackson, CEO of Chicago Public Schools. “Maintaining the health and safety of our students remains our top priority and CPS will be working alongside CDPH to communicate with any faculty, staff, students and families that may be at risk.”

There are actions the general public, as well as, organizations can take to help minimize the risk of spread of COVID-19:

- Residents are encouraged to use the same precautions as advised for cold and flu season, such as performing frequent hand hygiene, washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol; covering your cough and sneeze; avoiding ill people; and staying home when sick (except to seek medical care). For more information, see CDPH’s [Guidance for Individuals and Households](#).
- Healthcare providers should be on the look-out for people with fever and respiratory symptoms and ask for detailed travel history. Follow [CDC’s Guidance for Healthcare Professionals](#).
- Childcare programs, K-12 schools and colleges/universities should review their emergency operations plans, including strategies for social distancing and on-line learning. Schools should consider postponing or cancelling student foreign exchange programs.
- Businesses and employers should actively encourage sick employees to stay home when sick, perform hand hygiene, and cover coughs and sneezes. Businesses should review their emergency operations plan, including identification of essential business functions, teleworking and flexible sick leave policies. For more information, see CDPH’s [COVID-19 Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#).
- Community- and faith-based organizations should review existing emergency operations plans. See CDPH’s [COVID-19 Guidance for Community- and Faith-based Organizations](#) and CDC’s [Interim Guidance: Get Your Mass Gatherings or Large Community Events Ready for COVID-19](#).

“The health and wellness of our students and staff are the district’s highest priority. We are working closely with local health officials to respond immediately to the situation,” said Dr. Kenneth Fox, M.D., Chief Health Officer, Chicago Public Schools. “Vaughn HS serves a special student population and the district will be focused on supporting them every step of the way.”

More information and updates on COVID-19 can be found on the [IDPH website](#), the [CDPH website](#), and the [CDC website](#). You can also contact the Chicago Department of Public Health at 312-746-4835 or coronavirus@chicago.gov.

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