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## **GOVERNOR PHIL SCOTT DETAILS DEVELOPMENT OF COVID-19 TASK FORCE**

**02 MARCH 2020**

Montpelier, Vt. – At the direction of Governor Phil Scott, Vermont Emergency Management has assembled an interagency task force to support the overall public health response being led by the Vermont Department of Health and further prepare for the likelihood of COVID-19 cases in Vermont.

The task force is charged with ensuring a coordinated statewide response to COVID-19, including for communicating potential community mitigation measures to slow or minimize the spread of the virus if cases occur and accelerate in the state. The group will also work to ensure communications and continuity planning occurs in a coordinated fashion across state government.

“We have plans in place for all hazards in the state of Vermont, including infectious disease. These are plans we update and exercise regularly, but each individual incident requires coordination of plans, resources and responsible agencies,” VEM Director Erica Bornemann said. “This group will be able to develop a COVID-19 specific long-term response plan to support the execution of potential community mitigation measures in the case of an outbreak in Vermont.”

As of March 2, 2020, there were no reported cases of Coronavirus in Vermont. For additional guidance and the latest information from the CDC and Vermont Department of Health, visit [healthvermont.gov/covid19](https://healthvermont.gov/covid19) or dial 2-1-1.

The COVID-19 task force includes representatives from Vermont Emergency Management, Vermont Departments of Public Safety, Health, Human Resources, Buildings and General Services, Agencies of Education and Human Services, Vermont National Guard,

Vermont Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Coalition, E-911 Board, Governor's Emergency Preparedness Advisory Council Chair, and Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"I want to thank our public health and emergency response teams for the work they've done to monitor and respond to this quickly evolving situation over the last several weeks," said Governor Phil Scott. "As this virus continues to spread globally, ensuring we stay ahead of it with a long-term mitigation plan is an important step in our response process, and I appreciate the expertise and leadership of this interagency group."

### **Public Guidance from the Vermont Department of Health**

Person-to-person spread of the virus is thought to occur mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Much is still unknown about how the virus spreads. Take these everyday preventive actions to help stop the spread of germs:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

If you have recently traveled to countries where there is transmission (China, Iran, South Korea, Italy or Japan), please contact the Vermont Department of Health (800-464-4343), which will provide guidance on what to look for, and what to do if you develop symptoms that could be from Coronavirus.

For more details on the state's response,

visit <https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/HS-COVID-19-Feb-28-2020-update.pdf>.