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For Immediate Release

The Athens City-County Health Department is requesting everyone’s help in slowing the spread of COVID-19.

According to the Ohio Department of Health Public Health Advisory System, Athens County has been elevated to an Orange Alert Level 2 due to increases in number of cases related to COVID-19. The Athens City-County Health Department is asking local residents to limit their exposure to large family and friend gatherings and to wear a facial covering while in public. People who are unable to wear a face mask for health reasons are encouraged to physically distance from others and seek help with resources such as food and medication. We are also asking for community members to practice patience and kindness with each other. Every person in our county is experiencing the challenges of the pandemic in various ways.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) tells us the main risk for spreading the SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is through respiratory droplets produced when people cough, sneeze, or talk. Creating at least a 6-foot space between people and covering the nose and mouth is an important safety measure in controlling the spread of the virus. Covering your mouth and nose helps protect you from respiratory droplets in the air and also prevents you from sharing respiratory droplets with others. It is important to resist the urge to pull down your mask when speaking. Facial coverings worn under the nose or chin are not protecting you or those around you. If you need a break from your facial covering, step outside alone or go to a secluded area to take a few deep breaths.

We want to thank everyone who has been wearing their facial covering in public and keeping a safe distance. The health department staff understand how difficult it is to refrain from gathering with groups of friends and families during the summer. We want to hug our family members who are grieving; we want to shake hands at church; we want to spend time in close proximity catching up with friends. During this time of community spread, we are asking for your patience as we grieve together and socialize from a distance for as long as it takes to minimize the risks from this dangerous disease.

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) call center is open for specific questions about COVID-19, 1-833-4 ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634). ODH updates the states numbers every day at 2pm. For Athens-specific questions regarding COVID-19, contact the Athens City-County Health Department at 740-592-4431 or visit the website www.athenspublichealth.org, Facebook page, and twitter @acchd_oh. Other information can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention page, www.cdc.gov, and the ODH Coronavirus page, www.coronavirus.ohio.gov. USE. TRUSTED. SOURCES. The potential for misinformation and rumors during times of high-profile global events/public health threats is high. Verify information before sharing.

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