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Contact:
Dr. James Gaskell, Health Commissioner, 740-592-4431 ext 5903, jgaskell@athenspublichealth.org
Ruth Dudding, Public Information Officer, 740-592-4431 ext 5912, rdudding@athenspublichealth.org

For Immediate Release

**Athens City-County Health Department preparing for increased statewide contact tracing efforts.**

The Athens City-County Health Department has increased its contact tracing capacity in preparation for the statewide effort to intensify COVID-19 testing. Contact tracing is a critical step in the COVID-19 disease investigation process. A contact tracer works with confirmed COVID-19 patients to identify individuals they have had contact with who meet a specified set of criteria identified by the Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). We encourage those who think they may be identified as a close contact to a COVID-19 patient to assist the health department in the following ways:

- Answer the phone when the health department calls or quickly return a message.
- Call your doctor if you develop symptoms and have not been tested for COVID-19.
- Self-quarantine for 14 days: stay home, take your temperature daily, stay 6 feet from others or wear a face covering.
- Go to the hospital if you have trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, or bluish lips or face.
- Let the health department know if you need anything such as food or other support while you are self-quarantined.

We appreciate the cooperation of close contacts we have already worked with in Athens County. If you would like to receive a COVID-19 test, look for a testing location on the ODH website, coronavirus.ohio.gov.

The Ohio Department of Health call center is open for specific questions about COVID-19, 1-833-4 ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634). The Ohio Department of Health updates the state's 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 Athens County Health Department 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 Ohio Department of Health Coronavirus page, www.coronavirus.ohio.gov.

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