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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

**1,200 Ohioans will be randomly tested for COVID-19 to better understand the impact of the virus.**

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) is preparing to randomly screen 1,200 Ohioans for COVID-19 as early as next week. The screening will provide a better understanding of the spread of the virus in Ohio. Selected homes will receive a postcard invitation to participate in the screening. An ODH employee will collect a sample from people who are willing to be tested in their homes.

COVID-19 testing for the general population will continue to follow ODH guidelines, currently outlined by three tiers of individuals based on their level of risk for becoming ill from the virus (see attached graphic). To date, OhioHealth O’Bleness Hospital has tested 658 people and Holzer Urgent Care has tested 41 people in Athens County.

When someone tests positive for COVID-19, a public health nurse from the health department contacts the individual and begins a contact investigation. Close contacts are those who have spent at least 10 minutes with the infected person at a distance of less than 6 feet. Those who have had minimal contact, less than 10 minutes of exposure and no physical contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, would not be considered a person under investigation. Those identified as a contact are instructed to quarantine themselves for 14 days and maintain contact with the health department. Anyone who believes they may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 needs to contact the Athens City-County Health Department or the Ohio Department of Health.

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 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 Athens City-County Health Department website [www.athenspublichealth.org](http://www.athenspublichealth.org) and Facebook page, twitter@acchd_oh, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), and the Ohio Department of Health Coronavirus page, [www.coronavirus.ohio.gov](http://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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### Priority 1

**Ohioans with symptoms who are:**
- Hospitalized.
- Healthcare workers. This includes behavioral health providers, home health workers, nursing facility and assisted living employees, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), housekeepers and others who work in healthcare and congregate living settings.*

### Priority 2

**Ohioans with symptoms who are:**
- Residents of long-term care/congregate living settings.
- First responders/public health workers/critical infrastructure workers.
- 65 and older.
- Living with underlying conditions.
  - Consideration should be given for testing racial and ethnic minorities with underlying illness, as they are at increased risk for COVID-19 and more severe illness.

**Ohioans without symptoms who are:**
- Residents or staff directly exposed during an outbreak in long-term care/congregate living settings.

**Other Ohioans who are:**
- Designated by public health officials to evaluate/manage community outbreaks (such as in workplaces, other large gatherings).

### Priority 3

**Ohioans with and without symptoms who are:**
- Receiving essential surgeries/procedures, including those that were reassessed after a delay.
- Receiving other medically necessary procedures not requiring an overnight stay/inpatient hospital admission, as defined by their providers’ process for COVID-19 testing.

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*Congregate living settings are those where more than six people live and where there is a propensity for rapid person-to-person spread of infectious disease. (Some examples are assisted living/nursing centers, Ohio Veterans Homes, residential facilities for mental health/substance use treatment; psychiatric hospitals/group homes; centers/facilities/group homes for people with intellectual disabilities; homeless and domestic violence shelters; youth detention centers; prisons; and jails.)*