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**State of Alabama**
**Press Release: Public Health, Alabama Department of**

# Alabama is prepared for COVID-19; supports CDC recommendations for returning travelers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Burnestine Taylor, M.D., (334) 206-5100
Karen Landers, M.D., (256) 383-1231

Since mid-January, the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) has worked with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to learn, prepare and provide the most up-to-date information about the new coronavirus that causes COVID-19. Travelers, including college students, business travelers, tourists and airline employees, are returning to Alabama from countries where the disease is widespread. ADPH has monitored more than 100 people returning from China and there are no positive cases of COVID-19.

As a clearer picture is emerging, ADPH advises the general public that the best way to avoid infection is to wash your hands frequently, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes, stay home when you are ill, and practice social distancing strategies such as staying 6 feet apart from other individuals. Flu shots are recommended for those who have not had one this season to allow for earlier identification and limit confusion as to whether COVID-19 or the flu. This will also hopefully free up resources for use if a COVID-19 outbreak occurs.

In addition, ADPH is asking that all universities and colleges implement their plans to mitigate and control the spread of disease on their campuses. The CDC has recommended that institutions of higher education consider postponing or cancelling upcoming student foreign exchange programs and is asking current program participants to return to their home country.

All persons returning from Level 3 or Level 2 countries with active community transmission (cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html) may have been exposed to COVID-19 and are asked to self-monitor for 14 days after leaving the affected area. ADPH will be providing materials with specific instructions on self-monitoring and practicing social distancing to institutions, companies, and others upon request. In addition, information with instructions on self-monitoring is available for download at alabamapublichealth.gov/infectiousdiseases/assets/cdc-care-booklet.pdf.

The ADPH Infectious Diseases & Outbreaks (ID&O) Division can answer general questions about COVID-19, at 334-206-5347 during regular business hours or visit the ADPH website at alabamapublichealth.gov/infectiousdiseases/2019-coronavirus.html. ADPH continues to monitor the situation and work with our partners to respond. Persons returning from countries with active community transmission who become sick and physicians are asked to contact ADPH ID&O at 1-800-338-8374.

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