RE: Protocol for Exposure to Covid-19 in the Courtroom

Dear Judges,

As we continue to expand in-person proceedings in our courts, there is an increased risk to judges and other court staff of exposure to COVID-19 in the courtroom. To assist you in managing your court as it relates to COVID-19, the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) has provided information on what is considered exposure and steps you should take in the event exposure occurs.

Risk of exposure to COVID-19 when in contact with an infected person is dependent on proximity and time. A person is considered exposed if he or she is in close contact with an infected person. Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet for 15 minutes cumulative time throughout the day.

If "exposed," as defined above, the person should quarantine for 14 days. The 14 days starts from the day of last exposure. The exposed person would need to get tested, ideally 5 days after the last exposure. The testing agency should be advised that the individual was exposed to COVID-19. It should be noted that even if the test result is negative, the person would still need to quarantine for the remainder of the 14 days.

Each court should designate a person responsible for gathering initial information about the exposure. This information should include:

- Name and DOB of person who tested positive (for confirmation purposes)
- When the person who tested positive began having symptoms
- When the person who tested positive had their COVID-19 test collected
- Location (facility) and dates the positive person worked
- Names and phone numbers for all those considered to be close contacts
- Whether masks were worn by all persons

The court designee would then communicate that information with the point of contact at the Department of Health.

Dr. Joel Tumlison will serve as the point of contact (POC) at the Arkansas Department of Health for the circuit and district courts if they experience an exposure. His contact information is Joel.Tumlison@arkansas.gov ; 501-707-5192.

Dr. Tumlison will consult with court personnel who have been exposed and could refer the person to an ADH nurse who would work to find a positive case's close contacts and try to immediately exclude them from the environment and recommend that they get tested.

I hope that this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

John Dan Kemp
Chief Justice