# Governor Whitmer Creates Task Forces to Combat Spread of Coronavirus

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Governor Whitmer Creates Task Forces to Combat Spread of Coronavirus**

*Governor creates COVID-19 task forces focused on state operations, health care, education, and the workforce*

**LANSING, Mich. --** Today, Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced the creation of four task forces to combat the spread of coronavirus and assess the impact it may have on Michiganders' day-to-day lives. The task forces include:

1. The COVID-19 Task Force on **State Operations,** covering all aspects of state operations, including employment and facilities;

2. The COVID-19 Task Force on **Health and Human Services,** covering the provision of medical and human services, including protecting the healthcare workforce;

3. The COVID-19 Task Force on **Education,** covering K-12 public schools and universities and colleges; and

4. The COVID-19 Task Force on **Economy/Workforce,** covering general economic impact, workforce, supply chain, business continuity, and related issues.

The task forces will include key state government agencies, who will work closely with the appropriate community and non-governmental stakeholders.

“While there have been no confirmed cases in Michigan yet, we must recognize that this virus has the potential to impact nearly every aspect of our lives,” said **Governor Whitmer**. “From our public schools, colleges, and universities to our businesses and hospitals, we must harness all of the resources we have to ensure we can prevent the spread of coronavirus and keep Michiganders safe. This is a strong, smart team that will make protecting our public health their number one priority and work closely with me to protect the people of our state.”

On February 3rd, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services activated the Community Health Emergency Coordination Center, and they have been working diligently with local health departments, health systems, and medical providers to make sure appropriate screening and preparations for COVID-19 are being made. On Friday, February 28th, Governor Whitmer activated the State Emergency Operations Center to maximize coordination with state, local and federal agencies, as well as private partners, and to help prevent the spread of the disease. Since then, the administration has been working with schools, businesses, medical providers, and local health departments to make sure they have the information they need to prepare for potential cases. Today, MDHHS also launched a campaign to raise awareness of appropriate hand washing techniques to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses.

COVID-19 has been identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness first detected in Wuhan City in the Hubei Province of China. As of March 3rd, there were over 91,313 cases globally, with over 3,000 deaths. There are at least 10 states reporting cases of the disease, with at least 2 deaths. Person-to-person spread of the virus has occurred in the U.S., with some of those occurring in people with no travel history and no known source of exposure.

Michigan currently has no known cases of the disease. For the general American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low. People in communities where ongoing community spread with the virus that causes COVID-19 has been reported are at elevated though still relatively low risk of exposure.

Patients with confirmed infection have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

The best prevention for viruses, such as influenza, the common cold or COVID-19 is to:

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for 20 seconds. If not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or upper sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- If you are sick, stay home, and avoid contact with others.

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at **Michigan.gov/Coronavirus** and **CDC.gov/Coronavirus**.

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