

NABSW Disaster Preparedness on COVID-19:

The CDC and WHO released reports earlier last week acknowledging the potential for a worldwide COVID -19 (Coronavirus) epidemic. Fortunately, despite the current administration, the United States is home to various level 4 laboratories and epidemiologists. National Association of Black Social Workers is aware of the recently released reports and the Disaster Preparedness Team is closely following national and international cases and projections.

Tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today. ~ African Proverb

Now is the time to prepare! Coronaviruses are common among animal species around the world. MERS- CoV and SARS- CoV are in the same virus family as COVID-19. Outbreaks of airborne viral infections always present an increased concern for public health. COVID-19 currently has no immunization or simple cure. Like the flu and common cold, this virus is spread through human contact.

Certain populations are at increased risk of contracting COVID-19 (CDC.gov, 2019):

- Healthcare workers caring for patients with COVID-19.
- Persons who have been in contact with someone who has or has been in contact with others diagnosed with COVID- 19.

Community providers and individuals are encouraged to increase awareness and practice preparedness measures such as:

- ***Voluntary Home Isolation:*** Stay home when you are sick with respiratory disease symptoms.
- ***Respiratory Etiquette:*** Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw it in the trash can.
- ***Hand Hygiene:*** Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, preferably 30 seconds.
- ******If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with 60%-95% alcohol.******
- ***Environmental Health Action:*** Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces and objects

Countries in eastern Asia and Europe are employing increased measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 cases. While these measures are not yet encouraged by the Federal government at this time, NABSW encourages members to acknowledge the disparities in our communities and begin more aggressive measures for preparedness. These actions include:

- Increase personal protective equipment (hand soap, face masks, nitrile gloves, disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizers)

- Remain current on prescription medications.
- Maintain supply of non-perishable household items.
- Maintain clean drinkable bottled/boxed water.
- Update emergency contact forms at work, schools and with family members.

On Monday March 2, 2020, the CDC confirmed 48 detected cases of COVID-19 in the United States. Since that time approximately 10 individuals have succumbed to the virus. Active cases have been reported in the following states: Washington, California, Oregon, Arizona, Michigan, Illinois, Florida, Georgia, New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin. Testing for the virus is currently not as accessible as more common illnesses. The CDC acknowledged initial test kits were faulty and they are working to distribute correct ones throughout the country (CDC.gov) Updates on cases are available on the CDC website, www.cdc.gov, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. In the event there are major changes, press releases and transcripts from conference calls are also available on the site.

Important Things to Consider

- It has been stated Lysol kills Coronavirus. ***The current strain, COVID-19 is new and Lysol nor other disinfectants are proven to “kill” the COVID-19 on contact.*** However, it is a good prevention method to reduce the spread of multiple viruses.
- Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, shortness of breath.
- Persons released from isolation may continue to pose a risk to infect others.
- COVID-19 is **NOT** the flu, however the symptoms are similar and similar precautions should be taken.

Disaster Preparedness encourages each chapter to designate one or two members as contact liaisons. These members will directly correspond with the Disaster Preparedness Committee. Please continue to follow updates from the Disaster Preparedness Committee on Facebook ([A Prepared People](#)) and through your local chapter.

The following links are helpful in building your preparedness kit:

Food: <https://www.ready.gov/food>

[Main supply list](#)

[Dollar Tree Preparedness Kit](#)

[Make your own hand sanitizer](#)

[Make safe disinfectant cleaners](#)

[Flu preparedness Tips](#)