



# City of Baker

“Great American Hometown”

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

**DARNELL WAITES**

March 4, 2020

Dear City of Baker Citizens:

The City of Baker is monitoring the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), a respiratory illness that can cause mild to severe symptoms such as fever, cough and shortness of breath.

In our City Building, our Building & Grounds and custodial staff are taking precautionary measures such as sanitizing surfaces, door handles and other common contact points more frequently. Additionally, we are placing hand sanitizer stands throughout City Buildings for visitors as well as employee work areas.

Listed below are some preventive steps to limit exposure and prevent the potential spread of respiratory viruses as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze
- If you are sick, stay at home
- If you suspect you or a family member may have an illness, please contact your physician or health care provider.

We are in constant communication with the Mayor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (MOHSEP) and the Louisiana Department of Health in our efforts to actively protect the public’s health in the City of Baker.

The safety and security of our Baker Community, employees and residents remain our top priority as we continue to monitor COVID-19 and proactively plan to prevent the potential spread of diseases.

Sincerely,

Darnell A. Waites  
Mayor, City of Baker

## COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

**\*No confirmed cases in Louisiana\***

### Situation

- As of 03/02/20, there are no confirmed cases of Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Louisiana.
- The nearest case is in Texas, and this person remains in isolation.
- There are 15 confirmed cases in the United States; another 47 individuals with COVID-19 have been repatriated.
- While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now expects there to be “community spread” in certain regions of the United States, the immediate threat to the United States and Louisiana remains low. We are not yet seeing the same spread other countries are seeing.
- The Louisiana Department of Health remains in close contact with the CDC and has been proactively preparing for the introduction of this virus since it was first identified in China earlier this year.
- COVID-19 in many ways behaves similarly to influenza. The CDC are recommending using Pandemic Influenza Preparedness as our model for response, with the key focus being on Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPI).
  - NPIs are actions, apart from getting vaccinated and taking *medicine* that people and communities can take to help slow the spread of illnesses like pandemic influenza (flu). NPIs are also known as community mitigation strategies.
- Louisiana has been working on Pandemic Preparedness for the last 15 years. We have a comprehensive State Pandemic Plan. We have also encouraged Pandemic Planning throughout the State, both in the governmental sector as well as the private sector.
- **At this time, what poses a greater risk to Louisiana residents is the flu. It’s not too late to get your flu shot – which is available at no cost at your parish public health unit.**

Number of cases globally	83,000+
Number of countries reporting cases	50
Number of deaths	2,700+
Number of cases in the United States	62 (12 travelers, 3 person-to-person, 47 repatriated)
Number of cases in Louisiana	0
Persons Under Investigation/Suspected cases in Louisiana	0
Nearest case	Texas (San Antonio) via Diamond Princess Cruise

### About Coronavirus

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others that circulate among animals, including camels, cats and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can evolve and infect people and then spread between people, like has been seen with recent outbreaks of MERS and SARS.

### General Public Questions

If you have questions about the Coronavirus, please contact the Coronavirus general information line at 1-855-523-2652 from 8 am – 4:30 pm Monday through Friday.

### Immediate Threat to the Public is Low

Currently, the immediate threat to the general public in the U.S. remains low. People with recent travel to China, South Korea, Iran, Italy, or Japan (or those who have come in contact with someone who has recently traveled to one of these countries and is ill with COVID-19) have a greater risk for becoming ill. Reported cases have ranged from mild illness (similar to a common cold) to severe pneumonia that requires hospitalization. So far, deaths have been reported mainly in older adults who had other health conditions. To minimize the risk of spread, Louisiana health officials are working with health care providers to promptly identify and evaluate any suspected cases.

### Symptoms

For confirmed COVID-19 infections, reported illnesses have ranged from infected people with little to no symptoms (similar to the common cold) to people being severely ill and dying. Symptoms can include fever, cough, and shortness of breath/difficulty breathing.

The CDC believe at this time that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 after exposure. There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19 infection. People infected with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms.

### How is the virus spread

Health experts are still learning the details about how this new coronavirus spreads. Other coronaviruses spread from an infected person to others through:

- Respiratory droplets produced when coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes

### What can you do

Anyone who recently traveled to China, South Korea, Iran, Italy, or Japan within the previous 14 days, who experiences fever, cough, or other acute illness should contact a health care provider as soon as possible and mention your recent travel. Please call ahead and inform the health care provider about your travel history.

It is currently flu and respiratory disease season, and flu activity is still high and expected to continue for a number of weeks. Take steps to avoid spreading germs from any respiratory diseases by:

- Getting a flu vaccine and taking flu antivirals if prescribed
- Covering your cough
- Staying home if you are sick
- Washing your hands

### State Response

- Louisiana has been working on Pandemic Preparedness for the last 15 years. We have a comprehensive State Pandemic Plan; additionally, we have also encouraged Pandemic Planning throughout the State, both in the government and private sectors.
- Louisiana has also put together a COVID-19 Task Force to build upon our pandemic plan in order to respond to the COVID-19 threat more specifically. Members will include essential subject matter experts from public health, hospital preparedness, human resources, emergency preparedness, and other government agencies.
- The Louisiana Department of Health is now able to test for the virus in the state public health lab.