



News Releases

DHEC Investigating Two Possible Cases of 2019 Novel Coronavirus in South Carolina

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Today the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) announced it is investigating two possible cases of the COVID-19 novel coronavirus. The presumptive positive cases are not linked. One case is located in Kershaw County and one case is located in Charleston County.

Preliminary Information

- One patient is an elderly adult female from Kershaw County who has been hospitalized and is in isolation.
- A second patient is an adult female from Charleston County who recently traveled to France and Italy. The patient did not require hospitalization and is self-isolated at home.

"We understand that residents have concerns about how the virus may impact South Carolinians," said Dr. Linda Bell, State Epidemiologist. "While the risk to the public remains low, there is no evidence of ongoing transmission in the community at this time and our primary goals remain prevention and control."

The samples submitted tested positive at DHEC's Public Health Laboratory. These results are required to be confirmed by the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) laboratory and are in the process of being submitted for this confirmatory testing. DHEC will update the public as soon as the test results from the CDC are available, which typically takes 24 to 48 hours after the specimens are received. At this time, DHEC has tested a total of 10 individuals for COVID-19, including the two presumptive positives today. The remaining tests are negative. DHEC has the ability to test 80 to 100 patients per day.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more serious diseases such as pneumonia. DHEC is working with CDC to identify all those who might have been in contact with these individuals. These people will be monitored for fever and respiratory symptoms.

"No additional precautions are recommended for the public at this time, beyond the simple daily precautions that everyone should always take steps to stop the spread of illness, including getting the flu vaccine, washing your hands, covering your cough, and appropriately disposing tissues and other items contaminated with respiratory droplets," said Dr. Bell.

As the state's lead for public health, DHEC is taking proactive steps to be prepared to protect the health of South Carolina's communities, including informing healthcare providers throughout the state of recommendations for testing, the availability for testing and the appropriate precautions for the general public.

"We have developed strong relationships with health providers through the years," said Dr. Bell. "Together, we have planned, prepared, and tested our ability to respond to public health events like this."

For general questions about COVID-19 residents should visit the DHEC website at atcdhec.gov/COVID19 or the CDC website [here](#).

For residents concerned about their own personal health or are showing symptoms such as fever, cough or shortness of breath, please call your personal doctor or healthcare provider. DHEC has launched its Care Line. If residents have general questions about COVID-19, the DHEC Care Line is here to help. Call **1-855-472-3432**. Staff are answering calls from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Call volume has been high. Callers are urged to be patient if they receive a busy signal and try their call at a later time.

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