



Rhode Island Department of Health

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Date: February 5, 2020

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Message from Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott:

We are taking a number of preparedness steps right now throughout the Rhode Island Department of Health when it comes to coronavirus. That includes work happening at our State Health Laboratories, and in our Center for Acute Infectious Disease Epidemiology, and our Center for Emergency Preparedness and Response, among other areas. We're doing this because preparedness is a fundamental principle of public health.

However, our partners at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC, continue to let us know that the risk level for the public in the United States right now is low. We are not seeing widespread transmission of coronavirus in the community in the U.S. The reality is that people in Rhode Island are much more likely to get the flu and have serious health complications because of the flu than they are to get coronavirus. That's why all Rhode Islanders should continue to take the basic health precautions that help protect against viruses. They include washing your hands regularly, covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your arm, and staying home when you are sick. We all have a role to play in keeping our community healthy.

One last point is that we all also have a role to play in keeping our community a kind and welcoming place; a place where we treat each other with compassion and support. A person's risk for coronavirus is closely tied to their very recent travel history, and to the very recent travel histories of their immediate contacts. That is very different from someone's nationality or ethnicity. Someone's nationality or ethnicity is not a risk factor for coronavirus. This is something that we all need to understand, and it's also something we should be talking about with the children and teenagers we know. For more information about coronavirus, see health.ri.gov/ncov