

# *From the Chancellor's Desk*

*February 6, 2020*



The health and safety of everyone is top priority at Peralta Community College District. The District has been following the information about the novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV). I would like to share this update, implications for safety, and guidelines from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the Coronavirus causes a respiratory illness and "...can cause mild symptoms including a runny nose, sore throat, cough, and fever. It can be more severe for some persons and can lead to pneumonia or breathing difficulties. More rarely, the disease can be fatal. Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as, diabetes and heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus."

As background, the novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. It has infected at least 17,205 people, with 169 (0.98%) of these being outside of China. In some cases, it has been fatal.

For the most recent, up to date information, you can read more at the CDC website here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. According to the Alameda County Public Health Department, the immediate health risk from novel coronavirus to the general public in California and Alameda County is low. While the threat to the Peralta community is currently considered low, outbreaks of new viruses in humans are always a public health concern.

The Peralta District Department of Health Services and Alameda County Public Health Department are working with local, state and federal partners including the California Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to protect the health of our community.

The best preventative steps for any communicable disease include simple practices as part of your daily routine, and especially during flu season. There is currently no vaccine to prevent 2019-nCoV infection. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then immediately throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

If you traveled to China and feel ill and experience symptoms of fever, lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing), please limit contact with others and visit the Health Centers on Campus where you will be evaluated and instructed on when/where to seek help from a primary care provider.

Anyone with symptoms of a cold who has not recently traveled to Wuhan or been in close contact with someone who has, should stay home and recuperate. Seek medical attention as needed for worsening or severe symptoms like difficulty breathing.

Reasons to stay encouraged:

- This situation is being handled with the utmost urgency all over the world. The recent designations by the WHO and the United States government mean that worldwide and nationwide efforts are being put in place to understand the virus better and to limit its spread.
- The risk in the US remains statistically zero unless you have been to Wuhan or are in close contact with someone who brought the virus back from Wuhan. All cases in the U.S. have been recent travelers there except for two who are close contacts (spouse and household member) of someone who did.

We will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as they become available. In the meantime, remember that Peralta serves a diverse community of learners and we are committed to maintaining a welcoming environment of belonging. Please treat each other with respect and kindness in these challenging times. You are all important members of our community.

Many students and employees are natives of China and/or have family and friends there and may be concerned for their well-being. Please know that the Peralta community supports and cares about you, and we send our best wishes for the health and wellbeing of your loved ones.

Take good care,



Dr. Regina Stanback Stroud  
Chancellor