



National Black Nurses Association, Inc.
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Coronavirus Health Alert

A Call for Health Awareness and Education

The World Health Organization reported that it first received notice of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in December 2019. The virus originated in Wuhan, China and has spread quickly across the globe. The first confirmed case occurred in a 35-year-old Chinese female, and second the case was reported three days later in male South Korean patient who worked in Wuhan, China. As of March 9, 2020, there are 110,034 cases. China has reported over 80,000 cases, South Korea and Italy reported over 7,000 and followed by Iran with over 6,000 cases. The US reports 568 cases and 22 deaths.

What are coronaviruses – A coronavirus is a virus that causes respiratory infections. These viruses infect your nose, sinuses and upper throat. The symptoms are very similar to the flu virus and often ignored and under-reported. The COVID-19 virus is known as the SARS-CoV-2; it is closely related to the bat coronaviruses, pangolin coronaviruses and SARS-CoV-1. The general public and the health community will recognize this virus as similar to SARS and MERS. If a coronavirus infection spreads to the lower respiratory tract (“windpipe and lungs”), it can cause pneumonia and death. The elderly and sick are more vulnerable to this virus and more likely to die.

How does one get this virus – The virus is an epidemic that have crossed international borders. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have confirmed that the COVID-19 virus spreads person-to-person, and it is no longer just people who has traveled to China and other parts of the world. For more information visit the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/>

The Role of NBNA Nursing Community – NBNA 114-chapter members are well positioned to do what we do best as **Community Educator and Engagers**. As caregivers, providers, educators, researchers and community collaborators, we individually and collectively educate those in our churches, schools, community centers, universities and homes on how to protect themselves and their loved ones.

NBNA provided over 1,000 engagements at the local level in 2019. Therefore, we **Call to Action** for all chapters to provide structure education and information to promote health, well-being and safety of our communities; this includes reaching out to your healthcare partners, public health departments and politicians to ensure that our most vulnerable populations are protected from the virus.

2020 is the Year of the Nurse and Midwife – There is no vaccine for the virus. Therefore, as nurses caring for people and patients during this epidemic, we can return to our roots of public health and prevention of the spread of disease by teaching hand washing and hygiene practices, the best evidence to prevent the spread of diseases via person-to-person contact. **Tips for education and prevention:**

1. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
2. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
3. Stay home when you are sick.
4. Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
5. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
6. Follow CDC’s recommendations for using a facemask.
 - CDC **does not recommend** that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
 - **Facemasks** should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.
 - The use of facemasks is also crucial for [health workers](#) and [people who are taking care of someone in close settings](#) (at home or in a health care facility).
7. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
 - Keep hand sanitizer with you and provide to your children and family
 - Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty
 - For information about handwashing, see [CDC’s Handwashing](#) website
 - For information specific to healthcare, see [CDC’s Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings](#)
8. **Travel alert** – if you do not have to travel outside the US, please do not do so as you may have delays with reentering the country and/or be placed into isolation for 14 or more days. Please visit the CDC for international travel health notices and travel restrictions.
9. **Protections for our NBNA Caregivers and Providers** – We want our own to be protected and health. Please visit the following CDC sites:

Providers, Clinicians and Educators should immediately implement [recommended infection prevention and control practices](#) if a patient is suspected of having COVID-19.

Caregivers, Researchers, Educators and others [Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens](#) from Patients Under Investigation (PUIs) for COVID-19 and [Biosafety FAQs](#) for handling and processing specimens from suspected cases

Thank you for everything that you do to keep our communities healthy.

Sincerely,



Martha A. Dawson, DNP, RN, FACHE
President
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