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For Immediate Release

Joint Information Center formed to enhance COVID-19 communication

MORGANTOWN, WV (March 11, 2020) — As a key element in the effort to prepare for future cases of COVID-19, or coronavirus, in Monongalia County, a group of stakeholders organized by Monongalia County Health Department has established a Joint Information Center (JIC) that will facilitate factual updates, messaging and guidance to the community.

Although no cases of COVID-19 have been diagnosed yet in West Virginia, in-state testing began on Saturday.

“This will allow Monongalia County Health Department to work with hospitals, clinics, WVU, schools, law enforcement, first responders and other community members as we monitor this situation,” said Dr. Lee B. Smith, MCHD executive director and county health officer.

Through the JIC, timely and factual information will be disseminated to its members as well as to the public.

In addition to Monongalia County Health Department, members of the JIC include Monongalia County Emergency Management, WVU, WVU Medicine, Mon Health Medical Center, Mon EMS, MECCA 911, the City of Morgantown, Morgantown Police Department, Monongalia County Sheriff’s Department, Morgantown Area Chamber of Commerce, Monongalia County Schools, Milan Puskar Health Right, Encompass Health and the Morgantown chapter of the American Red Cross. Additional members could be added.

The JIC will meet regularly and as needed, usually virtually, in order to exchange information and keep everyone up to date on the latest developments. Some members,

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including MECCA 911, the City of Morgantown and the Red Cross, have stated that they will defer all questions regarding COVID-19 to Monongalia County Health Department.

Additionally, Monongalia County Health Department has created a COVID-19 web page that will be updated by noon daily and as needed. The page, at www.monchd.org/covid-19.html, also features links to the COVID-19 pages of WVU, the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization.

A JIC is part of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), which is a comprehensive, national approach to incident management that is applicable to all jurisdictional levels and across functional disciplines. It is intended to be applicable across a full spectrum of potential incidents, hazards and impacts, regardless of size, location or complexity.

Check out monchd.org and follow us on Facebook and Twitter @WVMCHD and on Instagram at #wvmchd for up-to-date information on health and wellness in the community.

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