FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Feb. 29, 2020

Dear Kershaw County School District Families-

We have received guidance on the emerging outbreak of a new coronavirus. The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) is reminding South Carolinians to take steps to protect themselves against a more present threat — the flu.

**What we know:** COVID-19, the new coronavirus responsible for an outbreak that began in Wuhan, China, is a serious public health concern and DHEC is working with federal and state health partners in preparation to prevent its spread. DHEC’s message is that the immediate risk to the U.S. general public remains low at this time. Meanwhile, flu activity across the nation and South Carolina remains widespread. As of Feb. 12, there have been 1,931 hospitalizations and 68 flu-related deaths reported in South Carolina this flu season.

**Symptoms:** “It’s important to remember that symptoms of COVID-19 are the same as the flu,” said Dr. Michael Kacka, DHEC Physician and Medical Consultant. “We are currently seeing widespread transmission of flu. The risk for exposure to the flu for the general population is high and the risk of complications and deaths from the flu are a far greater public health threat than COVID-19 in the U.S. at this time.” DHEC continues to encourage people who are unvaccinated to get the flu vaccine. This protects individuals and the public and reduces confusion of more common respiratory illnesses with possible COVID-19 illnesses.

**Prevention:** Other steps South Carolinians can take to help stay healthy include:
- **washing your hands,**
- **covering your cough,**
- **staying home when you’re sick,** and
- **appropriately disposing tissues and other items that you’ve sneezed or coughed into.**

For update and information visit the South Carolina DHEC website at; scdhec.gov/COVID19. For more information about the flu, visit scdhec.gov/flu.

Respectfully,

Dr. Shane Robbins, ATC
Superintendent
COVID-19

If you have recently traveled to China and are experiencing symptoms mentioned below, call ahead to your health care provider before seeking medical care.

What is it?
- A new respiratory virus first identified in Wuhan, China
- It has the potential to cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people

How is it spread?
- Through the air by coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes

Who is at risk?
- Travelers to and from certain areas are at increased risk as are the close contacts of those who are ill
- Current risk to the general public is low

What are the symptoms?
Illnesses can be mild, or in some cases be severe enough to require hospitalization. Symptoms of this respiratory illness primarily include:
- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath

How is it prevented?
Similar to prevention of other respiratory illnesses, including the flu:
- Wash hands often
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid contact with sick people
- Stay home while you are sick; avoid others
- Cover mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing