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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, NOVEMBER 10, 2020

NEWS RELEASE

COVID-19 Outbreak Identified at City of Durango 911 Communications Center

Durango, CO: Through a combination of laboratory testing and epidemiological investigation, San Juan Basin Public Health (SJBPH) and the City of Durango have identified a COVID-19 outbreak at the 911 Communications Center in Durango. Three employees have been confirmed as COVID-19 cases. SJBPH and the City of Durango have identified 1 close contact of the positive cases among fellow employees. SJBPH and City of Durango staff took immediate action to limit the further spread of disease. SJBPH and City of Durango staff are referring contacts for diagnostic testing and issuing quarantine and isolation instructions to the affected individuals. In addition, SJBPH is providing infection control guidance to City of Durango staff who are providing support with the outbreak investigation and are taking all appropriate measures to stop spread of the virus.

State and local case counts have risen dramatically in the last two weeks and urgent action is needed from all community members to reduce spread of the virus. Southwest Colorado is at a critical moment for containing COVID-19. The choices that the community makes in the next two weeks will determine whether the region loses control of virus spread and exceeds the capacity of the healthcare system, leading to unnecessary deaths.

This outbreak investigation is ongoing, and additional cases or contacts may be identified. The City of Durango has confirmed that the individuals who tested positive did not have direct contact with the public during their infectious period. A close contact is someone who was within six feet of a confirmed case for fifteen minutes or longer. SJBPH and City of Durango staff are working to contact individuals believed to have had close contact with all confirmed cases.

Operations at the 911 Communications Center are not impacted by this outbreak. 911 Services will continue at normal levels. Should this outbreak continue to impact additional staff, plans are in place

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COVID 19 OUTBREAK AT 911 COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

to ensure 911 services continue for the community. If you are experiencing an emergency, please utilize 911.

As with any communicable disease, this case investigation will take some time to complete. In order to protect the privacy of the individuals, identifying information and medical information about the persons involved will not be released to the public.

“The safety of our community is our top priority; staff is working closely with San Juan Basin Public Health to ensure the continuity of operations, the wellbeing of our employees and the community,” said City Manager, José Madrigal.

“This outbreak is evidence of ongoing widespread community transmission and a reminder that everyone needs to take urgent action to reduce the spread of this novel virus,” said Liane Jollon, executive director of SJBPH. “We hope that with quick action on the part of SJBPH and the City of Durango together, this outbreak will be quickly contained and resolved. It remains critical that people, especially those in close contact with one another, take the virus seriously, reduce their social contacts, wear masks, monitor their symptoms, and get tested if they are feeling any symptoms of COVID-19.”

SJBPH is urging all community members to increase their practice of the following critical public health precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as we head into the winter holiday season:

- staying at home as much as possible, especially when feeling unwell for any reason,
- avoiding social gatherings with more than one household, especially indoors,
- encouraging employees to work from home whenever possible,
- practicing physical distancing (staying at least 6 feet away from another person),
- wearing face coverings when in public, as required,
- practicing good hygiene (washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes, etc.), and
- getting tested if you have symptoms or believe you’ve been exposed through a known contact or community interaction.

COVID-19 diagnostic testing is widely available in both Archuleta and La Plata counties; visit <https://sjbpublichealth.org/testing/> to see locations, dates and times.

For the most up to date information, visit SJBPH’s website at <https://sjbpublichealth.org/coronavirus/>.

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