

# **CORONAVIRUS: Impact on Rotary**

March 7, 2020

Dear Rotarians, Rotaractors, Interactors, and Friends of Rotary,

I am writing to you to inform you about Coronavirus, how this disease outbreak can impact your Rotary club, and what should be done to continue our mission of “Service Above Self” to our communities.

Coronavirus, or COVID-19, is a novel (new) respiratory virus which is rapidly spreading from its origin in Wuhan, China, to many parts of the world. It is likely to spread to our communities soon. The major concern is what appears to be a high mortality rate (2%-3%) as well as the ease of transmission from person to person, while there is not an available vaccine or anti-viral medication for this disease.

Understand the terms VIRAL LOAD, ISOLATION, and REVERSE ISOLATION.

VIRAL LOAD is the number of a given virus strain that enters your body. Your immune system may effectively prevent symptoms if you are exposed to only a low number of these viruses, but a larger number may overwhelm your immune system and cause symptoms. Your goal should be to MINIMIZE the Viral Load you are exposed to.

ISOLATION is the process of placing a sick person in a separate environment so that people will not have physical contact with that sick person. This can be done through at home isolation with some diseases, while other disease cases must be isolated in a hospital.

REVERSE ISOLATION is the process of placing in isolation a person who does not have the infectious disease, but whose immune system is compromised by another disease which places that person at higher risk of getting the infectious disease and dying from it.

To reduce your personal risk of becoming infected, wash your hands frequently with soap or hand-sanitizer; clean countertops, desks, laptops, and doorknobs frequently; keep your hands away from your eyes, nose, and mouth; and reduce your close contact with other people. STOP the handshakes, hugs, and kisses that we often see at Rotary gatherings! I recommend a RIGHT ELBOW BUMP instead.

To reduce your risk of transmitting disease to others, stay home if you feel sick; sneeze or cough into your LEFT ELBOW; and use tissues to wipe eyes, nose, and mouth—once only, then dispose.

At this time, I recommend that Rotary clubs continue to meet as scheduled and to continue fundraising and community service projects. Those who have severe chronic medical conditions such as lung disease and immune deficiencies should be allowed to attend meetings by audio- or video-conference call.

Our district is continuing plans for the Multi-District President-Elect Training Seminar in Syracuse on March 13-14, the District Training Assembly in Canandaigua on April 4, and the District Conference in Niagara Falls, NY on May 1-3. Rotary International has given District Governors the authority to postpone or cancel these mandatory training events if local circumstances dictate. Of course, if these events are canceled, your registration fees will be refunded.

Along with District Youth Exchange Chair Julie Carney, I am monitoring the status of our inbound and outbound youth exchange students. At this time, we are recommending that they stay in place, but will accommodate parents who request an early return home.

I am monitoring [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and [www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/](http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/) (These are very reliable, apolitical sources of information.)

Wishing you the best of health,

DG Dave Hannan