



# Panhandle Health District

*Healthy People in Healthy Communities*

**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Panhandle Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 22, 2020

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## **Stopping Stigma and Discrimination**

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Panhandle Health District

*This is a series about COVID-19 preparation and regional updates. Check the Press daily for new information, tips, and ways our health care professionals are working to keep our community safe.*

As we begin to see more of our neighbors, friends, and loved ones no longer being monitored by public health for COVID-19, it's important to recognize that adjusting back to 'normal' life can be difficult. Being isolated because of sickness can manifest in a variety of reactions when you are finally able to come out of isolation. These reactions may include:

- Mixed emotions, including relief after isolation
- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Stress from the experience of monitoring yourself or being monitored by others for signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- Sadness, anger, or frustration because friends or loved ones have unfounded fears of contracting the disease from contact with you, even though you have been determined not to be contagious
- Guilt about not being able to perform normal work or parenting duties during isolation
- Other emotional or mental health changes

Children may also feel upset or have other strong emotions if they, or someone they know, has been released from isolation.

When these individuals are going through an emotionally difficult time, we as a community should not make it more difficult for them by placing stigma or discriminating against them. Here are a few facts and tips that can help calm fears and stop stigma:

- Someone who has completed their isolation or met the requirements to discontinue monitoring does not pose a risk of spreading COVID-19.
- People of Asian descent, including Chinese Americans, are not more likely to get coronavirus than anyone else. Let people know that being of Asian descent does not increase the chance of getting or spreading COVID-19.

- Viruses cannot target people from specific populations, ethnicities, or racial backgrounds.
- People who have not been in contact with a person who is a confirmed or suspected case are not at greater risk of acquiring and spreading this new virus than others.
- People who returned more than 14 days ago from an area with widespread or ongoing community spread and do not have symptoms of coronavirus do not put others at risk.
- Share with others the need for social support for people who have experienced stigma, who have returned from an area with ongoing spread, or who are worried about friends or relatives in the affected areas.
- Be cautious about the images that are shared. Make sure they do not reinforce stereotypes.
- Know the facts about COVID-19 and help prevent the spread of rumors by gathering information from reliable sources.

To help counter stigma and due to other reasons, we maintain privacy and confidentiality of those seeking health care, confirmed cases of COVID-19, and those who may be part of any contact investigation.

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**Panhandle Health District** provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.

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