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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**RESIDENTS NEED TO RAMP UP SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES  
AS U.S. NOW LEADS THE WORLD IN TOTAL COVID-19 CASES**

(Toms River) - The weather is warming, the birds are chirping and we are all feeling a little case of cabin fever. But don't let the alluring signs of spring keep you from doing your part by practicing proper social distancing.

"Some individuals may not be taking the social distancing guidelines too seriously, or are taking short cuts," advises Daniel Regenye, Ocean County Health Department Public Health Coordinator/Health Officer. "That's why the OCHD believes it's a good time to make another strong push to get the message across just how much social distancing can work by limiting the spread of the COVID-19 to others. Regenye informs us, "There is no need to panic, and the public health community was expecting the numbers to rise as more people are being tested. We need everyone to do their part while we are all on the frontlines of this outbreak."

"So many people are doing a great job, despite the inconveniences, by following the critical social distancing and hand and respiratory hygiene guidelines provided by the CDC and our health department," explains Ocean County Freeholder Gerry P. Little, Liaison to the Ocean County Board of Health. "Right now we are asking everyone to just step it up a notch because not only do we have a responsibility to protect ourselves but we also have a responsibility to protect others by staying home and avoid gatherings with other people even with the weather warming up."

One thing scientists have learned about the COVID-19 virus is that it is much like the seasonal flu bug because it's spread through droplets when sneezing or coughing. It is imperative people fight the urge to shake hands, give hugs and forget to consistently wash their hands.

"Adhering to the 6 foot rule can actually save lives. It's not easy for most of us to isolate ourselves from family and the people you live with - especially if those people live with a child or are a caretaker," Regenye adds." New numbers released show that New Jersey has the second highest number of cases of any state with over 6,000 positive cases.

The OCHD is urging people at home from their job, school or normal routines to try and keep their mind and body healthy by exercising, eating healthy, reading, doing puzzles or play board games. Children and adults need to limit TV watching and keep from overdoing the video games and too much time spent on the phone.

"Too much television and news about the outbreak can lead to a serious depression for some. It can also disturb your rest by keeping a person from getting adequate sleep. The mind is conditioned with routines and now many of those routines have been disrupted. So why not use the extra time at home to stimulate the body through exercise, even if it means improvising, now that your favorite gym is closed during the outbreak," says OCHD Assistant Public Health Coordinator, Patty High.

Regenye went on to offer advice for those people new to working at home. He suggests you find a nice quiet space and don't let family distractions be a stressor if you're trying to meet that tight deadline or are on that important call with your boss and the dog starts barking incessantly. It's important to limit those little nuisances when on the job, even if it's at home.

And don't overdo it. Mental health experts say some individuals tend to get carried away doing their job because of all the comforts of home it provides. Your work day should have a start and end if possible just like at the office. For those recently out of work, it can be easy to get depressed or down on yourself. Keep busy by updating your resume, networking and looking for resources to help you find that next opportunity instead of waiting till the last moment.

Everyone is looking forward to getting back to our normal lives, but with the COVID-19 virus still sticking around it's time for everyone to pitch in and follow the social distancing guidelines outlined on the links provided at the Ocean County Health Department website at [www.ochd.org](http://www.ochd.org) or call our Information Call Line at 732-341-9700 ext. 7411.

You can also call the NJDOH hotline available around the clock for questions at 1-800-222-1222 or by dialing 2-1-1.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019ncov/summary.html>  
or New Jersey Department of Health website at:  
<https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml> .