



NEWS RELEASE

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New Data Supports Social Distancing Now More Than Ever

Atlanta – As Governor Brian Kemp and DPH Commissioner Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H., finalize the details of the Executive Order requiring Georgians to shelter in place, it is important to emphasize why these measures are needed now to keep all Georgians healthy and safe and to stop the spread of COVID-19.

For weeks it has been known that people who were positive for COVID-19 but did not have symptoms likely were able to transmit the virus. However, on March 30, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Robert Redfield, M.D., confirmed that new data indicates that **as many as 25%** of individuals infected with COVID-19 remain asymptomatic. Additionally, science also now informs us that individuals who are symptomatic, are **infectious up to 48 hours before symptoms appear**. This new information tells the health care community, medical researchers, public health and governments why COVID-19 is spreading so rapidly.

“Until now, containing the spread of COVID-19 has been based on early detection and isolation of people with symptoms of the virus,” said Toomey. “Social distancing and keeping people apart from each other are now more than just recommendations; they are the best weapons we have to stop the spread of COVID-19.”

In addition to social distancing, all Georgians are reminded to wash their hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (60% alcohol) when soap and water aren't available. Avoid touching your face, nose, mouth and eyes with unwashed hands. Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and throw the used tissue in the trash.

To read more about presymptomatic transmission of COVID-19:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-guidance-management-patients.html>
https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6914e1.htm?s_cid=mm6914e1_w

For more information about COVID-19 <https://dph.georgia.gov/novelcoronavirus> or <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

For updates on the COVID-19 situation as it develops, follow @GaDPH, @GeorgiaEMA, and @GovKemp on Twitter and @GaDPH, @GEMA.OHS, and @GovKemp on Facebook.