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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New Case of COVID-19 Recorded in Cowley County

The Cowley County Public Health Officer has announced that the number of confirmed active cases of COVID-19 in Cowley County has risen to four (4). The most recent test results were provided late Tuesday evening. Two men traveled to Cowley County in hopes of acquiring employment, arrived late Friday night and checked into a local motel. On Saturday one of the men complained of back and shoulder pain and was transported to a local ER for treatment. He returned to the ER the next day and was tested for COVID-19 as a precaution and in line with the facility protocol to prevent disease spread. The test results were provided to the Public Health Officer Tuesday evening and quarantine and disease tracing procedures began immediately. Both men and several contacts are under quarantine at this time. The disease investigation has so far revealed that there is little evidence to suggest that the two men had any broad based local community interactions; rather they stayed within a close group while waiting for the work week to start and apply for employment. Our investigation has learned that the man who is ill claims to have had direct contact with a person ill with COVID-19 in another state before coming here.

This specific case is challenging to administer. There are barriers that we are facing including trust, language and the realization that the two men do not have a permanent residences in our state.

My greatest responsibility remains the health and safety of our Cowley County residents and our local workforce. Our success to date in keeping this illness out of our population and business community has been phenomenal. Obviously it has created a sense of safety that people in other communities have noticed. This in turn results in people wishing to come here seeking employment.

Several local employers, notably Creekstone Farms, have partnered with the Health Department in efforts to help us prevent a situation from occurring in Cowley County similar to those in other beef industry communities. The person who is ill is not a Creekstone Farms employee and has not been to or in to the plant.

This newest case again illustrates how easy it is for disease to enter a community, I implore our local residents to remain diligent and to take every precaution that they can to monitor their own health status to practice social distancing and enhanced hygiene including handwashing. The local threat for this illness is very real and is likely to continue to grow in the months ahead as social activity increases.

If you have any symptoms of illness please contact your health care provider. Testing for COVID-19 is available through many providers including the health department. We will help you be tested and connect you with the help you need.

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