FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 12, 2020  
CONTACT: Steuben County Public Health Director Darlene Smith (607) 664-2438

*Steuben Public Health strongly recommends immediate actions to slow COVID-19 spread*

BATH – With the World Health Organization (WHO) recognizing COVID-19 reaching pandemic levels, Steuben County Public Health Department urges residents to take immediate precautions to limit the spread of disease.

Although there are currently no Steuben County cases of COVID-19, Public Health officials and County management are taking steps to limit the potential spread of the disease. Mass gatherings and social events are being limited, postponed, or canceled to ensure that potential exposure and spread of COVID-19 does not occur. Organizations that have planned mass gathering events in the coming weeks should strongly consider immediate cancelation or postponement.

“We will not be surprised to see COVID-19 reaching Steuben County as it continues to spread across the country, but we are hoping to limit the harm of the disease by taking action early to limit contact,” stated County Public Health Director, Darlene Smith.

Effective March 13, all congregate meal sites in Steuben County are closed. Meals on Wheels will deliver those meals to individuals at their homes. The senior population and those with underlying health issues are the most at risk for developing severe cases of COVID-19 if they are exposed, and are strongly urged to reconsider attending public gatherings.

Governor Cuomo announced a statewide ban of gatherings of more than 500 people, effective March 13 at 5:00 pm. For gatherings under 500 people, there is a mandate to reduce the seating capacity by half.

Updates on other closures in the county will be available on Steuben County’s website at [www.steubencony.org](http://www.steubencony.org).

“Practicing everyday health habits is still one of our best lines of defense against COVID-19 and other illnesses,” Smith said. “Regularly wash hands for at least 20 seconds, don’t touch your face with unwashed hands where viruses can enter through the nose, mouth and eyes, disinfect high touch surfaces often, stay home when sick and avoid others who are sick.”

The County Public Health Department continues to work closely with the New York State Department of Health and CDC to monitor individuals who could have been exposed to COVID-19 per established guidelines.

The New York State Department of Health has a call in hotline for coronavirus questions that can be reached by calling 1-888-364-3065 and is available 24/7.