



## OHIO CONFERENCE RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

**[Dayton, OH, March 6, 2020 – For Immediate Release]**

Due to the outbreak of respiratory disease caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) across the world and here in the United States, the Ohio Conference is taking proactive steps to ensure the health and safety of our members, students and employees.

Ohio Conference leadership continues to monitor this fluid situation. As of earlier today, there were 100,656 [confirmed coronavirus cases](#) worldwide; 238 of those were in the US.

Regarding activities within the Ohio Conference:

1. All conference sponsored events and meetings will take place as scheduled.
2. All churches and schools are strongly encouraged to follow [CDC guidelines and recommendations](#) to protect against the spread of respiratory illnesses like the coronavirus. This includes:
  - a. Good [hand hygiene](#) habits (wash with soap and water for 20 seconds); set up hand sanitizer stations around churches and schools.
  - b. Respiratory ([cough/sneeze](#)) etiquette; cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue then throw it into the trash.
  - c. Staying home when sick with flu or cold symptoms, worship and tithe [online](#).
  - d. Perform routine [environmental cleaning](#) of churches, schools, homes.
3. Any international travel by churches or schools must be approved by the Ohio Conference and [Adventist Risk Management](#), who follow recommendations by the [CDC](#) regarding travel.
4. Should a public school district close within the Ohio Conference due to the coronavirus, any Ohio Conference school located within that district should close as well.
5. Consider greetings outside traditional handshakes and hugs to minimize the spread of any illness. Implement fist, elbow or foot bumps instead.
6. Use care when providing potluck meals, to protect potentially vulnerable church members, especially the elderly. Follow [CDC environmental cleaning and disinfection recommendations](#) for church and school kitchens.
7. Encourage those who have recently returned from China, South Korea, Italy and Iran to [stay home for 14 days after returning to the US and practice social distancing](#).

Join us as we pray about this evolving situation, for communities across the globe, and particularly for those who have contracted this illness and those who have lost loved ones.

The Ohio Conference will continue following the guidelines of the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [World Health Organization](#), [Adventist Risk Management](#), as well as the [State of Ohio Department of Health](#) in regards to the coronavirus spread.

Check back often on our website for updates, news and information:  
<http://www.ohioadventist.org/virus>.

### **About the Ohio Conference and Seventh-day Adventists**

Organized in 1861, the Ohio Conference was among the first Seventh-day Adventist local conferences established. Today it is a network of 100 diverse congregations, 11 schools, one medical college, and 12,000 members.

As one of eight conferences within the Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, the Ohio Conference is known for its pioneering outreach initiatives and commitment to being a Christ-centered, transforming presence in the community.

Among the historic institutions birthed in Ohio were Worthington Foods (which later merged with the Kellogg Corporation), Harding Hospital (now part of the Ohio State University Medical Center), and Kettering Medical Center (now part of Kettering Health Network, a health care ministry of eight hospitals and 120 outpatient facilities).

The Ohio Conference is part of a larger, worldwide fellowship of more than 20 million believers who strive daily to develop a closer relationship with Jesus Christ, to become more like Him, and to serve others as He did. The vision and mission for Ohio includes prayer, growing healthy churches, and helping others realize the hope found in experiencing a personal relationship with a living God and loving Savior, and to nurture them in preparation for His soon return.

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For more information about this topic or about the Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, please email Heidi A. Shoemaker, Communication Director, at [hshoemaker@ohioadventist.org](mailto:hshoemaker@ohioadventist.org) or 937.853.8468.