

**For Immediate Release
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Hot Spring County Judge
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HOT SPRING COUNTY PREPARES FOR COVID-19

The Arkansas Department of Health has announced the first confirmed case of the coronavirus, COVID-19, in a Hot Spring County resident. Judge Dennis Thornton would like to alert all citizens that following recommended individual best practices to limit the spread of the virus is “absolutely essential”.

- Frequent handwashing with warm soap and water.
- Wipe surfaces frequently with cleaners such as 10% Bleach, Lysol, Clorox wipes or other approved cleaners.
- Social distancing - Keep 6 feet from others and avoid crowded areas or public events. Staying at home really impacts the spread of a virus.
- Go out of the home for essentials only (food, prescriptions, work).
- Stay at home if you feel sick. Cover coughs and sneezes.

The County has been preparing for the virus. Closures of restaurants and other businesses required by the Governor have been accomplished. Courthouse services are limited to on-line, phone, or email. Necessary accommodations can be made by appointment only. Judge Thornton is in constant contact with County leaders from the fields of Government, Law Enforcement, First Responders, Public Health, 911, County Extension Service, ASU 3 Rivers, and volunteers. He also receives frequent updates from State and National leaders responsible for COVID-19 response. Personal protective equipment is being obtained by the County.

If you feel sick, call your medical doctor or the Baptist or UAMS numbers listed below. DO NOT go to your doctor's office or the Emergency Room unless you have already notified them that you may have symptoms of COVID-19.

Baptist Health Medical Center-HSC has set up a drive-thru COVID-19 screening location at 2204 Sullenberger Avenue in Malvern for Hot Spring County residents. It is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. until further notice. Those who have symptoms and need to be screened at the Hot Spring County site should call ahead to schedule an appointment. Please call 501-413-9106. DO NOT come to the drive-thru testing center without an appointment.

UAMS also provides testing and a free 24-hour hotline to help you decide what action to take should you or your family feel symptomatic. That number is 1-800-632-4502. For patients less than 18, call 1-800-743-3616.

The County website, hotspringcounty.org, will post daily updates from the Arkansas Department of Health along with helpful information on self-quarantine and COVID-19 avoidance tips.

Judge Thornton adds, “Our citizens are the most important resource we have. The County is determined to do what we can to dampen the spread of this virus and help our families. Each of us is responsible for doing our utmost to save lives. We must not be governed by fear but proceed with prayer and practicality.”