Virginia Beach Health Department Reports First COVID-19 Death

(Virginia Beach, Va.) -- Today, the Virginia Beach Health Department has reported the first death of a hospitalized patient who tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19.

The patient was a male in his 70s, with underlying health conditions. The cause of death was acute respiratory failure. The health department has initiated a contact investigation. At this time, it is early in the process to identify the source of transmission.

"It is a sad day in our city after learning a Virginia Beach resident has died of the virus. Our hearts go out to his family and friends," said Virginia Beach Health Director Dr. Demetria Lindsay. "Elderly individuals and those with underlying health conditions are at greater risk of complications from COVID-19, including death. These at-risk individuals are strongly advised to take steps to minimize contact with others who are ill, practice social distancing, and stay at home as much as possible."

This represents the 18th positive case of COVID-19 in Virginia Beach. The health department is concerned that several recent cases may represent the first indications of potential community transmission, the extent of which, would be determined by the outcome of the investigation. "We must take action now. The choices of each of us affects our community. Public health practices by everyone are critical to slow and blunt the spread of COVID-19," said Dr. Lindsay.

This new case will be included in the statewide case count tomorrow at noon on the VDH website at www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus.

The Regional Call Center is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday – Saturday and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. For COVID-19 questions, call **757-683-2745.**

To lower the risk of respiratory germ spread, including COVID-19, the Virginia Department of Health encourages the following effective behaviors:

- Elderly and those at-risk should stay at home as much as possible; if not possible, avoid large gatherings
- Practice social distancing of 6 feet or more.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer only if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Limit travel as much as possible.

This is a rapidly changing situation, and information is being shared as it becomes available on the following websites: www.cdc.gov/covid19 or www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/.