



**ORCHWA**  
Oregon Community Health Workers Association

## **ORCHWA statement about the Coronavirus/COVID-19**

ORCHWA values the power of coming together to care for each other. In fact, unity, community, and sharing are some of ORCHWA's core values because these are central to the work of CHWs and community-based organizations, and to our collective approach toward health equity and social justice. ORCHWA staff and Board are here to support you in every way we can while our offices are closed for at least the next two weeks. We will be working remotely and our lines of communication will remain open. We will be continuing our research, policy, and advocacy work with a focus on the current situation. Please don't hesitate to reach out to our staff for information, resources, and networking support.

The ORCHWA staff and Board acknowledge that the novel coronavirus pandemic has highlighted historical atrocities that run deeper than the shortcomings of the current health and governmental systems, which are more glaring now than ever. Indeed, health and social systems are ill-equipped to address the many intersecting impacts of settler colonialism, racism, classism, and ableism, and rarely, if ever, center the needs of communities that are farthest from justice. CHWs have always worked to address these root causes of inequities. With this in mind, as CHWs, we may be feeling a sense of "inertia" during this time and desire to keep the work going.

### **What we know about this virus**

Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases.\*

The following symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

COVID-19 is especially dangerous for people with compromised immune systems and other pre-existing conditions and the elderly. Be sure to check the CDC symptoms page for more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

Currently there is no vaccine, and it spreads through both person-to-person contact, and through contact with infected surfaces. People may be contagious with no symptoms, and can be contagious for up to three weeks. The CDC (Center for Communicable Disease) and WHO (World Health Organization) websites have more information, recommendations and frequently updated information:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

### **What You Can Do To Protect Yourself and Our Communities**

- Stay home if you are sick
  - If you are sick: You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a doctor's office.
  - If you are NOT sick: You do not need to wear a facemask. Facemasks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.
- Avoid large gatherings of people
- Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily, e.g. doorknobs, tables, toys, and playground equipment
- Track the CDC and WHO websites for information as it unfolds in real time

### **CHWs: Problem-Solving Through Social Distancing**

- Always follow your employer or volunteer agency's social distancing recommendations
- When possible, communicate with participants through phone, privacy-compliant email, texting and/or messenger apps
- If you bring supplies to participants, make plans to place them in safe spaces on porches or doorsteps
- Share what else you are doing to support your community members right now and get suggestions from others in our [online community support share](#)

Here are some ideas:

- Organize a hand sanitizer, toilet paper, etc. take-back & re-distribution drive
- Meal delivery for elders and school-age children

We're including resources below, both conventional and community based, to support your vital efforts. We will continue gathering and sharing resources via our listserv (please contact us

if you'd like to be added: [info@orchwa.org](mailto:info@orchwa.org)), and we ask you to send along resources you find as well. As ever, we will do this work best if we join our efforts and share our knowledge.

Remember: exhaustion, stress, and lack of nutrition can all negatively impact our immune systems. Prioritizing your own health will enable you to serve your communities more effectively, and modeling that behavior is another way to empower their own self care. Taking 15 minutes as needed to do deep breathing or stretch, eat a snack, or connect with friends or family can help everyone involved far more than pushing through until you fall down. Stay connected, stay self-compassionate, whatever you need to do to cope is valid.

In community we are strong.

With you in solidarity,

The ORCHWA staff and board

## References & Resources

- [COVID-19 Workshop Materials for CHWS from Multnomah County Health Department](#)
- [COVID-19 Information in Different Languages from Multnomah County Health Department](#)
- [Novel Coronavirus Updates and Resources \(COVID-19\) from Oregon Health Authority](#)
- [CHW COVID-19 resources from the National Association of Community Health Workers](#)
- [CHW Survey on COVID-19 from the National Association of Community Health Workers](#)
- [Community, care, and how to show up for others during Covid-19](#)
- [Plain Language Information on COVID-19 by and for people with developmental disabilities](#)
- [Coronavirus resources from the National Healthcare for the Homeless Council](#)
- [The COVID-19 Outbreak in Oregon - Medical Recommendations for Immediate Action](#)
- [Oregon Food Bank Locations](#)
- [Portland area COVID-19 "Request Support" Form](#)
- [Self-care Tips if you become sick with COVID-19 from an activist nurse](#)
- [‘The Cripples Will Save You’: A Critical Coronavirus Message from a Disability Activist](#)
- [Coronavirus: Wisdom from a Social Justice Lens: COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) Preparation for People Living with Chronic Illnesses in the United States](#)
- [Pod Mapping for Mutual Aid](#)
- [Petition for a rent freeze in Portland, OR](#)
- [Free Comcast Internet Essentials if you have a kid that qualifies for a free or reduced cost lunch program](#)
- [Where Portland-area families can find free grab-and-go kids meals during school shutdown](#)