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**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Long Beach Island Health Department Investigates Covid-19 Outbreak Among Lifeguards**

To date 17 Surf City and 18 Harvey Cedars lifeguards tested positive for Covid-19. Approximately half are experiencing mild symptoms and the other half are asymptomatic. No hospitalizations have been reported in connection with this outbreak.

On Saturday July 18<sup>th</sup>, the Long Beach Island Health Department began receiving reports from Beach Patrol Supervisors of both Surf City and Harvey Cedars Boroughs of possible Covid-19 case activity among lifeguards. That triggered our Public Health Nurses to investigate suspect cases, confirm illness and issue isolation orders. Additionally, close contacts would be identified and quarantined to prevent further spread.

As the investigation proceeded throughout last week, it was identified that Covid-19 positive cases shared attendance at a common social gathering on July 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. That helped to focus the public health investigation to capture those that had attended these gatherings to either quarantine or if symptomatic to isolate and seek testing.

Prior to the beach season Municipal Lifeguard Beach Patrols, made numerous changes to the way they operate in order to distance Lifeguards, such as only 1 guard in the stand at a time, guards report directly to beach stands and no communal activities. In the event a guard tested positive for Covid-19 it would significantly minimize opportunities for disease transmission. Based on our investigation so far, the workplace was not the source of transmission and practices likely prevented additional cases.

The youth and young adults should recognize they are not immune to this virus. It is imperative to understand how individuals conduct themselves both inside and especially outside of work, can have significant implications on their own risk to acquire Covid-19 and transmit it to their family, friends and potentially co-workers.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. As a reminder, the LBIHD recommends preventive actions to help halt the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- SOCIAL DISTANCING
- Wear a face covering when unable to social distance
- Avoid large gatherings
- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating, after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing;
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol;
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth;
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick;
- Staying home when you are sick and avoiding contact with persons in poor health;
- Covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then disposing of the tissue;
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe;

For more information on COVID-19, call the New Jersey hotlines available around the clock for questions as follows:

Call (General Covid-19 Questions): 2-1-1 (7a-11p)

Call (General Covid -19 Questions): 1-800-222-1222

Call (Speak With a Health Professional): 1-800-962-1253 (24/7)

Text NJCOVID to 898-211 to receive texts updates

Text: your zip code to 898-211 for live text assistance

Additional information can be found at:

Office Site of The State Of New Jersey at:

<https://covid19.nj.gov/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

New Jersey Department of Health website at

<https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>