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**Media Release**

**For Immediate Release**

**March 13, 2020**

**Public Information about COVID-19**

St. Paul, AB - Local governments within the St. Paul region are advising the public about measures being taken pertaining to COVID-19, otherwise known as the Coronavirus.

At this time there is low risk to the residents of the St. Paul region. There have been no presumptive cases of the Coronavirus.

The municipalities have determined that most services will operate as normal. These services include road maintenance, water, wastewater, and waste management. Public buildings, such as the municipal offices remain open at this time. St. Paul Aquatic Centre, the Clancy Arena and all other Town recreation facilities are closed immediately for 30 days. At that time, the Town of St. Paul will reassess the situation and move forward in the best interest of the health of our citizens.

Alberta Health Services has implemented new public health restrictions on large gatherings. All large events with more than 250 attendees should be cancelled. Each community or event organizer should undertake a risk assessment to determine what makes sense for them. The gatherings do not include places of worship, grocery stores, airports or shopping centers.

The public will be advised as soon as possible of any changes.

The municipalities encourage the public to use on-line payments if possible, as well as requesting information by phone or email rather than attending our offices in person at this time.

The municipalities are following the lead of Alberta Health Services. As of March 13, in Alberta, there are 23 presumptive cases. The overall risk of exposure to the Coronavirus in Alberta remains low. The situation with the virus is very fluid from day to day. The risk may increase over the coming weeks.

Alberta Health Services is advising residents who feel they have the symptoms to phone Health Link 811 and to schedule an appointment for testing. COVID-19 symptoms are similar to influenza or other respiratory illnesses. Common symptoms include fever, cough, and extreme tiredness. Symptoms of serious illness include difficulty breathing and pneumonia.

Individuals who suspect they have the symptoms of the virus or have the virus should self-isolate themselves for 14 days.

Effective March 12, all Albertans who are currently outside the country should self-isolate on their return for 14 days and monitor their health, independent of the country they were visiting. If individuals experience symptoms they should call Health Link 811 to book an appointment to be tested.

There is an increased risk of more severe outcomes for Canadians who are aged 65 and over, with compromised immune systems, and with underlying medical conditions.

The municipalities within the St. Paul region are continuing to monitor the situation and will advise the public if there are outbreaks in the region.

The public should refer to the Alberta Health Services website for the most up-to-date information about the virus.