



Date: May 29, 2020

Time: 10:00am

To: Local Media

From: Peter Schade, MPH, RS

### **Investigation of local COVID-19 outbreaks**

The Erie County Health Department is investigating two local outbreaks of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Erie County, Ohio. Outbreaks are located at the Ohio Veterans Home in Sandusky, Ohio and a nursery in Huron, Ohio.

As of May 29, 2020, the Ohio Veterans Home has 13 employees and 47 residents who have received laboratory-confirmed positive test results for COVID-19, and 10 residents of the Ohio Veterans Home have passed away as a result of COVID-19. COVID-19 spreads rapidly in long-term residential care facilities like the Ohio Veterans Home. Persons with chronic underlying medical conditions are at greater risk for COVID-19–associated severe disease and death. The Ohio Veterans Home is working closely with the Erie County Health Department and has implemented all necessary infection control measures, including widespread testing and contact tracing.

In early March of this year, the nursery established a program addressing COVID-19 and the potential impact to their employees. This program includes mandatory face coverings, distancing protocol, additional disinfecting of all areas in the business and daily required temperature checks. In the past two weeks, with the continued program in place, the nursery recognized a few employees displaying signs of COVID-19. These employees were in contact with physicians then sent for testing.

As of May 29, 2020, four (4) nursery employees residing in Erie County, Ohio have received laboratory-confirmed positive test results for COVID-19, and an additional five (5) individuals are awaiting test results. The Company has taken all necessary actions to mitigate the spread of the virus as described above.

The nursery is a wholesale grower of plants selling to businesses and employs over 375 individuals. The employees have no contact with the general public. The Erie County Health Department will continue to work with both the nursery and the Ohio Veterans Home to conduct ongoing testing and contact tracing to contain the outbreaks.

The Erie County Health Department is offering COVID-19 testing at no out-of-pocket cost to anyone who lives or works in Erie County, Ohio. Both PCR testing (nasal swab used to determine if you are currently infected with COVID-19) and Antibody testing (blood draw from

the arm used to determine if you were infected with COVID-19 in the past), are available. You must register online for testing at [CovidErieOhio.com](https://CovidErieOhio.com).

You can help us fight the spread of COVID-19 in our community. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, such as cough, fever, or shortness of breath, enter them into our [Symptom Collector](#). This tool helps public health officials track the spread of the virus in Erie County and allocate resources where needed. For up-to-date local information, visit the Erie County COVID-19 Dashboard at [CovidErieOhio.com](https://CovidErieOhio.com). For questions about COVID-19, call the Erie County COVID-19 Information Center at 567-867-3243.

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