Statement on the first case of COVID-19 in Columbia County:

Today 3-22-2020 Columbia County Emergency Management Agency was notified by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency of the first positive case of COVID-19 in Columbia County.

Details of the patient will not be released at this time.

With testing becoming more available to area healthcare facilities, Columbia County expects to see more positive cases in the coming days.

It is imperative now more than ever, that we heed the advice of the Pennsylvania Department of Health and Governor Wolf by practicing social distancing. If you are sick or have a mild cough, stay home until you are feeling better. If you are showing symptoms of COVID-19 it is very important that you first CALL your doctor to speak with them. Then follow their instruction as to how to proceed. The doctor's office will then take the proper precautions prior to your arrival, or may advise you of another means of treatment. Visiting your doctor, without calling, can lead to infecting more people in the doctor's office.

Symptoms of COVID-19 can include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. The symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure. Reported illnesses have ranged from people with little to no symptoms to people being severely ill and dying.

We all must begin using preventative measures to slow the spread of COVID-19. Cover coughs or sneezes with your elbow. Do not use your hands! Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Clean surfaces frequently, including countertops, light switches, cell phones, remotes, and other frequently touched items.

We all have a very important job to do right now: stay calm, stay home and stay safe. By all of us working together we can slow the spread of COVID-19.