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## **For Immediate Release**

### ***Planet Fitness follow-up: Governor’s gym guidance mandates wearing masks***

**MORGANTOWN, WV (June 29, 2020)** — Monongalia County Health Department is following up on the incident of a Planet Fitness client testing positive for COVID-19 after working out at the facility.

The health department issued a press release to media outlets and posted on social media Saturday in an effort to alert 205 members who were at Planet Fitness on Fort Pierpont Road between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Wednesday, June 24, asking them to quarantine and self-monitor for symptoms.

“We wanted to reach people as quickly as possible, so they could make good decisions about avoiding public places, wearing a mask and following other guidelines for individuals who have been potentially exposed,” said Dr. Lee B. Smith, MCHD executive director and county health officer.

The 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. time frame was chosen in order to cast as wide a net as possible.

“Aerosols can linger in the air and viruses can linger on surfaces,” Dr. Smith said. “Also, while gym members sign in, they don’t sign out, so there is no way to know how long they stayed there.”

At a gym, compared to many other businesses, clients are usually there for a longer period of time and perform exercises that can cause them to breath harder than usual. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a primary transmission route for COVID-19 is close contact and respiratory droplets that can travel when someone speaks, sings, breathes hard, etc.

Also, while surfaces can and should be wiped down, touching them also can be a way to come in contact with a virus if someone touches a piece of equipment and then touches their eyes, nose or mouth.

Individuals who are concerned about COVID-19 exposure should self-quarantine, and also be careful to distance themselves from others in their household or wear a mask around them if they can’t. They should self-monitor for symptoms. Those who do develop symptoms should call their primary care provider and also get tested.

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MCHD was alerted on Saturday that an individual who had worked out on Wednesday at Planet Fitness became symptomatic on Friday and received positive test results on Saturday. MCHD public health nurses, who conduct disease investigation and contact tracing, have been in touch with and will monitor this individual as well as determine any other contacts who would need to be notified.

On Monday, a registered sanitarian from MCHD Environmental Health visited Planet Fitness but was unable to get in because of professional industrial cleaning that was going on.

A review of Gov. Jim Justice's guidance for gyms, revised on June 22, states that anyone in a gym, whether a client or a staff member, should wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including face coverings, "to the greatest extent possible." That guidance, as well as all others issued by Gov. Jim Justice, can be found at [monchd.org/covid-19](http://monchd.org/covid-19).

The registered sanitarian plans to return to Planet Fitness to place a sign on the door stating that masks are required to enter the facility.

"We know that masks help prevent the spread of COVID-19, and that's why we recommend wearing them in public," Dr. Smith said. "Other precautions include maintaining a social distance of six feet and washing hands thoroughly and often."

COVID-19 cases have been on the rise in several states, including Florida and Texas, which have rolled back some re-opening measures. Dr. Smith advises that people follow guidelines in order to avoid a similar situation at West Virginia, where cases also have been on the rise. Since June 17, the state has seen an increase in COVID-19 cases of about 500, twice the rate of increases during a similar period of time, from June 5 to 17. That number was 238. In that same time, Monongalia County gained 22 cases, after a period slower increases.

"We want to be able to get back to business and for people to be able to live their lives, but we have to be smart about it and proceed in a safe manner in order for that to continue," Dr. Smith said.

Anyone with COVID-19 questions can call the WVU Medicine COVID hotline at 304-598-6000. More information can also be found at MCHD's COVID-19 web pages, [monchd.org/covid-19](http://monchd.org/covid-19), [monchd.org/covid-19-guidance](http://monchd.org/covid-19-guidance) and [monchd.org/covid-19-stats](http://monchd.org/covid-19-stats). They also can follow MCHD's social media: Facebook and Twitter @WVMCHD and Instagram at #WVMCHD.