[DATE]

Citizens of Riley County,

I am writing to provide you an update about the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, and efforts to ensure the health and safety of all Riley County residents. On March 13, the Local Health Officer recommended to the USD 383 Board of Education to close all USD 383 Manhattan-Ogden School District schools and suspend school-related activities for 14 days effective Monday, March 16th. School and associated activities are scheduled to resume on Monday March 30th.

Today, the Local Health Officer, in consultation with the Superintendent with Riley County USD 378, has mandated that USD 378 close all schools and suspend all school-related activities for 14 days effective Monday, March 16th.

The decision to temporarily close USD 383 and USD 378 schools was not made lightly, but was a necessary precaution given the unique characteristics and transient population of the City of Manhattan as well as the large number of students in USD 378 that live in Manhattan. The Riley County Health Department, along with partners from throughout the County, continues to monitor the situation and develop a coordinated and comprehensive public health plan to ensure we are prepared when cases arise in our community.

The decision to not close Blue Valley/Randolph USD 384 was made after consultation with district administrators and taking into consideration the rural nature of the school, as well as no confirmed cases in Riley County. This can change as developments unfold and we urge all parents of USD 384 to stay informed.

The Board of County Commissioners have directed all county departments to review their Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP) to ensure that, in the event of a confirmed Covid-19 case in Riley County, that all essential operations will continue. The Board of County Commissioners are staying informed of the situation and providing the necessary support to the Riley County Health Department and the applicable planning and response partners.

We continue to monitor the situation closely and will continue to provide information as quickly as we can should the situation change. Notifications to the public will be via press releases, the RCHD Facebook page and other media as the situation dictates.

Please continue to visit our website: www.rileycountyks.gov/286/health-department

Julie Gibbs, MPH

Local Health Officer