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For Immediate Release

Rochester Water Reclamation Plant aids in COVID-19 research initiative

May 14, 2020 – Rochester, MN – The Rochester Water Reclamation Plant is in charge of treating all of the municipal wastewater generated from within the City of Rochester totaling over thirteen million gallons per day. The Water Reclamation Plant has recently collaborated with the University of Minnesota to study whether COVID-19 can be detected in raw untreated wastewater. Many wastewater plants from around Minnesota are participating in this study by sending in samples of raw wastewater from their communities.

The study, led by Dr. Glenn Simmons Jr. and Dr. Richard Melvin of the Department of Biomedical Sciences at the University of Minnesota Medical School's Duluth campus, will test samples provided by the wastewater facilities for COVID-19. This research may help state leaders and healthcare professionals trace the spread of COVID-19. "We are looking at a way of getting a population-level understanding of how much infection exists within the community. And by doing that, we'll then be able to monitor how well our state's mitigation and treatment efforts are really working." Dr. Simmons said.

The Rochester Water Reclamation Plant has participated in several University studies in the past looking at trace pollutants and the effects of pharmaceuticals. "We don't have the equipment or capabilities to conduct the high level research that a University can, so we are excited and welcome this opportunity to partner with outside entities to increase our knowledge," said Wendy Turri, Interim Public Works Director for the City of Rochester.

This research is focused only on raw wastewater or sewage and not the treated effluent that is discharged by the treatment plants. The Rochester Water Reclamation Plant process currently removes harmful viruses and pathogens by disinfection with chlorine prior to discharging it to the Zumbro River. Studies show that the corona virus has never been detected in treated, disinfected wastewater.

For more information see <https://med.umn.edu/news-events/third-u-developed-testing-strategy-may-help-trace-spread-covid-19>

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NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC



EMERGENCY DECLARATIONS

Stay at Home
Executive Order 20-20
Effective until May 18

City of Rochester
Declaration of Local Emergency
Issued March 17, 2020

Olmsted County
Public Health Emergency
Issued March 17, 2020

Minnesota Peacetime State of
Emergency EM-3453
Issued March 13, 2020

National Emergency
Concerning Novel Coronavirus
Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak
Issued March 13, 2020

LOCAL ACTIVATIONS

City of Rochester
Emergency Operations Plan

Joint Information Center (JIC)

City of Rochester Emergency
Operations Center (EOC)

EOC STRATEGY
Ensure Community Lifelines

EOC OBJECTIVES
Continuity of Operations
Timely Community and
Teammate Communication
Economic Stability
Community Stability
Healthcare System Support

*Lifelines enable the continuous
operation of critical government
and business functions and are
essential to human health and
safety or economic security.*

ROCHESTERMN.GOV/COVID19