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Placer, Yolo county health officers recommend COVID-19 mitigation

AUBURN, Calif. and WOODLAND, Calif. - Laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the region are increasing rapidly. In one week, the number of cases in Yolo and Placer counties has grown from 1 to 8. This number includes travel-related cases and their contacts, and we are now seeing evidence of community spread – meaning, cases of unknown origin. Yolo’s first case of COVID-19 is believed to be community-acquired. Given the amount of time that has elapsed since the return of passengers from the Grand Princess on Feb. 21, we know that COVID-19 has been spreading in the Placer community as well. To date, public health teams have focused on identifying and separating persons with COVID-19 from others and tracking down persons who were exposed to the infected person. This containment approach has helped to slow the introduction of COVID-19 into the United States. With community spread, public health departments must now shift their efforts to community mitigation measures that will slow the spread of COVID-19 in the community, protect those who are most vulnerable to severe illness, and allow the health care system to prepare resources to take care of severely ill patients. Like a handful of other counties in California, Placer and Yolo counties will now enter this new phase.

This is a critical moment in the growing outbreak of COVID-19 in the region, and decisive action is needed to slow the spread of the disease. Public health officials have weighed the potential benefits to the community’s health against the disruptive effects that these recommendations could have. These decisions were not made lightly, and recommendations are based on the best information we have at this time.

The following recommendations are effective immediately, will extend through March 31, 2020 and could be extended as we continually evaluate the COVID-19 outbreak.

Placer and Yolo public health officials are now recommending:

1. Workplaces: Workplaces and businesses should implement telecommuting for their employees, if this is feasible, and minimize the number of employees working within arm’s length of each other. Follow posted [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\) guidance](#).

2. Large Gatherings: Those who are planning large gatherings should consider modifying, postponing or cancelling them, especially if large numbers of people will be within arm's length of each other. Follow posted [CDPH guidance under Scenario II](#).
3. Schools:
 - a. Schools that have a COVID-19 exposure or a case should make decisions about closing or other actions in collaboration with their local health department.
 - b. Schools should also follow posted [CDPH and California Department of Education joint guidance under Scenario II or higher](#), depending on circumstances.
 - c. Schools should minimize students and/or staff working within arm's length of each other whenever feasible.
4. Sick Persons:
 - a. Everyone should stay home if they are sick until they have had no fever, cough or other respiratory symptoms for at least 72 hours after symptoms resolve or 7 days after symptoms began, whichever is longer.
 - b. Individuals with cold-like symptoms should manage their symptoms at home with over-the-counter drugs whenever possible, regardless of whether they have a cold, the flu, or COVID-19.
 - c. Individuals who develop difficulty breathing, feel extremely tired, or were feeling better but then feel a lot worse should call their health care provider. If they will be going to the provider's office or urgent care center, they should call ahead so that the health care provider can be prepared to take care of them.
 - d. People should only call 911 or go to an emergency department if they believe that their life is in imminent danger. Other emergencies are still occurring, and emergency resources must be available to address all of them, not just COVID-19.
5. Vulnerable Populations: The risk of severe disease from COVID-19 escalates as age increases, with persons over the age of 60 at highest risk of complications and severe disease. Regardless of age, people with chronic health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, heart disease, or lung diseases such as COPD, as well as those with severely weakened immune systems are also at high risk of complications. People at higher risk should consider staying home and away from crowded social gatherings where people are within arm's length of one another. For example, avoid parades, conferences, sporting events, and concerts.
6. Exposed Persons: With the shift from containment to mitigation, it is no longer necessary for someone who has been in contact with a person who has COVID-19 to quarantine for 14 days. This applies to the general public, as well as health care workers and first responders. However, exposed persons should self-monitor for respiratory symptoms and fever. If they develop symptoms, they should stay home in order to protect those who are well – again, for 72 hours after symptoms resolve or 7 days after symptoms began, whichever is longer.

7. Masks: Follow recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for using a facemask.
 - a. The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
 - b. Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).

8. Testing: Testing for COVID-19 is now available through commercial labs. However, just because a test is available does not mean that it is necessary for most people. People who have mild symptoms or are getting better do not need to get tested because their treatment will be the same, regardless of the test result. Testing is a decision made by health care providers to help in the care of very ill patients as well as to protect public health.

Stay informed using a reliable source. Information is changing frequently.

Additional guidance is available on county websites. Check and subscribe to your county's Public Health website and social media pages:

Placer County: www.placer.ca.gov/coronavirus

Yolo County: www.yolocounty.org/coronavirus

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