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Director

March 22, 2020
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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COVID-19 DAILY STATUS REPORT

PLEASE NOTE: This is an evolving situation. More information will be distributed as it becomes available. For the most up to date information, please visit: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus. Additional information is available at www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus.

CURRENT STATUS:

- As of Sunday, March 22, 2020, there is one confirmed case of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) in Merced County.
- The positive case is travel-related and was <u>not</u> acquired through community spread. The individual is doing well and is isolating and recovering at home. The Merced County Department of Public Health is working to identify potential contacts. Based on information provided by the individual, Public Health staff will assess risks of exposure and contact any affected individuals.
- A total of 37 people within Merced County have been tested within the public health system (one positive, 28 negative, 8 pending). <u>That number does not include additional testing through the commercial lab system, hospitals and clinics.</u> Although the Merced County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) isn't provided numbers on how many tests go through those systems, MCDPH will be notified of any positive tests.
- In California, there are 1,531 active cases and 29 deaths.

RECENT ACTIVITIES:

- Merced County Public Health continues to coordinate with federal, state and local partners to further prepare us for future impacts. This includes working with the California Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to monitor COVID-19.
- In coordination with the Merced County Office of Emergency Services, daily situational status calls continued today with local government agencies, schools, and healthcare professionals in our community.
- Businesses exempt from stay-at-home order: A new tab was added to www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus detailing what businesses can stay open or must close to the public. It provides links to the current list from the State as well as a link to the State's "Stay Home Except for Essential Needs" page.
- Senior Citizen Programs: Information for seniors was added to www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus under "Guidance for: Adult and Senior Care." The page addresses Meals on Wheels, Congregate Meal sites, and other senior programs.
- A call center is now available for Merced County to answer questions and provide information regarding COVID-19. The call center will be active from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and can be reached at 209-381-1180. Callers will hear an informational recording, and will have the option to speak with a live representative by pressing "0."
- On March 19, Governor Gavin Newsom announced Executive Order N-33-20, asking California residents to stay at home. On March 20, Merced County's Health Officer also

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issued an Order directing County residents to remain in their places of residence except to perform or receive essential services.

- Merced County will continue providing essential government services in a manner that decreases the risk of spreading COVID-19. For this reason, effective March 23, 2020, various County Departments have temporarily changed access to their in-person services. See www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus for details.
- The Merced County Office of Emergency Services and Merced County Department of Public Health proclaimed a local and public health emergency March 13 in order to help address the outbreak. The Board of Supervisors ratified those actions during a March 16 special meeting.
- The Merced County Public Health Department Operations Center was opened Jan. 27, 2020 (56 days) in order to prepare for COVID-19 in and around our community. The Merced County Emergency Operations Center is activated at a Level 1.

COVID-19 TESTING UPDATE FROM PUBLIC HEALTH:

- Within the public health system, every person who has met CDC criteria for severe disease within Merced County has been tested.
- Testing has been limited across the state of California, as noted multiple times by state officials as a barrier to response.
- Public Health is actively identifying other methods to enhance testing capability for providers throughout the community and increase testing county-wide. We will continue to be notified should positive tests come through either system (public health or commercial).

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Coronavirus symptoms include: mild to severe respiratory illness, fever, cough and difficulty breathing. If symptoms develop, individuals should stay at home to limit exposure to others.
- Persons who have recently traveled to China, Japan, South Korea, Iran, or Italy, or who have had contact with a person with possible COVID-19 infection and have the above symptoms should call their local health department or health care provider immediately.
- Do not go to your provider's office without calling ahead. Do not call 911 for suspected COVID-19 unless you are having a medical emergency.
- During the flu season, there are steps you can take to protect your health and the health of those around you:
  o Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds.
  o Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
  o Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  o Stay away from work, school or other people if you become sick with respiratory symptoms such as fever and cough.
  o Cover sneezes or coughs with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- **Sign up for COVID-19 alerts:www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus**
- Merced County Public Health COVID-19 **Information Webpage**:
  o www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus
- Merced County Public Health **Information Line**:
  o 209-381-1180 (English, Spanish, and Hmong).
- **Email** COVID-19-specific questions to Merced County Public Health:
  o COVID19@countyofmerced.com.
- CDC **Resources for Households**:
  o https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/index.html

- Guidance for **Businesses and Employers**:
  - https://bit.ly/2IH2G2u
  - www.covid19.ca.gov
- Report **Price Gouging**:
  - http://www.countyofmerced.com/3381/Price-Gouging
- Report **Consumer Fraud**:
  - www.countyofmerced.com/2322/Consumer-Fraud

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