SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

NEWS RELEASE
Public Health

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March 18, 2020

Two new cases of novel coronavirus recorded within county

San Bernardino County today reported its fourth and fifth case of novel coronavirus.

The county reported its first case on Sunday. Additional cases have been expected to emerge as private lab testing begins ramping up.

In an effort to protect the public from further spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, the County's Acting Health Officer on Tuesday ordered the cancellation of gatherings of any number of people within the county starting tomorrow through at least April 6, with key exceptions for work, public transportation, airport travel, grocery stores, charitable food distribution, certified farmers' markets, and shopping at stores or malls.

The order also requires, starting today, the closing of all movie theatres, gyms, health clubs, bars, adult entertainment establishments, and other businesses that serve alcohol but do not serve food. Food and beverage establishments must follow guidance issued by the California Department of Public Health on Monday (www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPA/Pages/NR20-024.aspx).

The order does not apply to congregate living situations, including dormitories and homeless encampments. All San Bernardino County public schools have voluntarily closed as part of the effort to stop the spread of the virus, according to the County Superintendent of Schools.

The order also strongly cautions that persons aged 65 years and older and person of any age with certain underlying health conditions are at increased risk should they contract COVID-19, and encourages them to self-quarantine.

"Residents of San Bernardino County are encouraged to stay home as much as possible while only participating in essential activities, such as critical work functions and shopping for necessities," said Acting County Health Officer Dr. Erin Gustafson. "We know these measures are challenging, but social distancing will help to protect all of our communities. We encourage older adults and those with chronic medical conditions to take additional precautions to avoid getting sick."

The county reported its first case of novel coronavirus on March 15.

On March 10, the County Public Health Officer and the Board of Supervisors declared a local health emergency to help ensure county government and the public would be prepared for the possibility that coronavirus would appear within the county and allow flexibility in response.

Various county departments and agencies have been working together since Jan. 25 to prepare for the possible arrival of the virus within the county. The County Department of Public Health activated its Department Operations Center on Feb. 13.

As with any virus, especially during the cold and flu season, there are a number of steps you can take to protect your health and those around you:

- People experiencing symptoms of contagious illness should seek medical guidance, not attend work or school, and avoid unnecessary contact with other people.
- Wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth, especially with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using regular household cleaning spray or wipes.
- N95 masks are not recommended outside a healthcare setting. Surgical masks can be worn by sick individuals to reduce the likelihood of spreading germs to others.

For information about the coronavirus crisis, visit the County's coronavirus website at http://wp.sbcounty.gov/dph/coronavirus/, email the County at coronavirus@dph.sbcounty.gov, or contact the coronavirus public information line from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday at 909-387-3911.