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No Local Cases of COVID-19 Reported, But County Declares Local Health Emergency to be Ready

03/11/2020 by [Steve Cassling](#)

San Bernardino County, CA – Yesterday, the San Bernardino County Public Health Officer and the Board of Supervisors declared a local health emergency to help ensure county government and the public are prepared for the possibility that COVID-19 will appear within the county.

No local cases have been reported in the county, although cases have been identified in neighboring Riverside, Los Angeles and Orange counties.

“The purpose of this declaration is not to alarm people but to increase the focus on preparedness for both the public and county government departments and agencies,” said Board of Supervisors Chairman Curt Hagman. “The health risk to the general public in San Bernardino County remains low at this time.”

Various appropriate county departments and agencies have been working together since Jan. 25 to prepare for the possible arrival of the virus within the county. That is when the county was notified an aircraft carrying U.S. citizens evacuated from the region in China where the virus had originated might be arriving at Ontario International Airport. The flight was eventually diverted to Riverside County. The County Department of Public Health activated its Department Operations Center on March 3.

Among the county departments and agencies meeting regularly to coordinate efforts are Public Health, Arrowhead Regional Medical Center, Office of Emergency Services, County Fire, Sheriff, and the Inland Counties Emergency Medical Agency.

County Public Health continues to work with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health to respond to reports of COVID-19. Although Governor Newsom declared a State of Emergency to help the

state prepare for broader spread of COVID-19, the health risk from COVID-19 to the general public in San Bernardino County remains low at this time.

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:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- 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.
- If someone does become sick with respiratory symptoms like fever and cough, they should stay away from work, school or other people to avoid spreading illness and seek assistance from their healthcare provider if symptoms become severe.
- 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 more information on COVID-19, please call (800) 722-4794 or visit the County Public Health COVID-19 webpage at <http://wp.sbcounty.gov/dph/coronavirus/>. Information is updated as soon as it is made available.