

## Talking Points on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

March 4, 2020

### How many cases are in the California?

- California has had a number of travel-related cases, and a limited number of close contact and community transmission cases.
- Sacramento County posts confirmed cases on the Sacramento County Public Health COVID-19 webpage, <http://covid19.saccounty.net>.
- For updated U.S. case numbers visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>

### Do you expect more cases?

- The CDC expects cases to increase, as COVID-19 is now circulating in the U.S. It is important to prepare for the possibility that additional local cases will appear in Sacramento County.
- While COVID-19 has a high transmission rate, it has a low mortality rate.
- California is carefully assessing the situation as it evolves.

### Should the public be worried?

- The COVID-19 is new, but the most important aspect of preparedness is calm. Don't panic.
- Remember, COVID-19 is caused by the novel coronavirus - a respiratory disease – just as is influenza.
- There are tried-and-true ways to deal with this type of illness.
- Think about a plan if your household, work, school or infrastructure is disrupted.

### What about schools?

- We understand students, staff and families may have concerns and anxiety about COVID-19, but please be assured that there is no need for alarm or to change daily routines.
- Staff and families should go about their daily lives and practice the same precautions you do during cold and flu season.

### What is the COVID-19 guidance for businesses/employers?

- The CDC provides the latest information for businesses/employers on their website under "[Information for Specific Groups.](#)"

- The CDC has recommended actions for employers, such as: Actively encourage sick employees to stay home; Emphasize respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene; Perform routine environmental cleaning; Advise employees to check the CDC Travelers Health Notices before travel; and Employees who have COVID-19, are exposed by a close contact or co-worker should notify their supervisor and refer to CDC guidance, but maintain confidentiality.

### **What are some tips to avoid the virus?**

- It is important people get the flu shot, not because the vaccine protects against COVID-19 but because we want to reserve supplies and resources for COVID-19 patients instead of those being used for preventable diseases.
- It is important to not panic but to be aware of your surroundings.
- Keep your distance from people who are sick, but remember, just because someone sneezes or coughs doesn't mean they have COVID-19 – there are a lot of respiratory viruses.
- Precautions you take when fighting the flu are no different from what people should be doing every day to avoid the coronavirus and other respiratory diseases:
  - Wash your hands regularly.
  - Cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze.
  - And when you're sick, stay home from work or school
  - These are all preventative steps to stop the spread of any respiratory virus.

### **What is being done to prevent the virus?**

- Remember, there are not many cases in the U.S., and the prevention strategies we've been doing for years apply to this novel coronavirus too.
- Sacramento County Public Health is continuing to work closely with the Center for Disease Control and California Department of Public Health on coordinated testing, investigations, and providing guidance and assistance to health providers in monitoring for acute respiratory illness and gathering recent travel information to detect new cases.
- All possible cases are collected and then shared with the CDC or CDPH laboratory for testing and confirming infection.
- The COVID-19 testing criteria of Sacramento County Public Health has expanded the travel history as COVID-19 is now circulating in a number of countries. Additionally, testing now includes severe disease with no etiology.
- Please check for updates on the Sacramento County website:  
<http://covid19.saccounty.net>

### **Should I wear a mask?**

- Common surgical masks block the droplets coming out of a sick person from getting into the air, but they are not tight enough to prevent what's already in the air from getting in.
- If you're not sick, you don't need to wear a mask.
- N95 masks are not only pricy, they are difficult to use without training and must be fitted and tested to work properly.
- Exam gloves can be helpful, but you must use them correctly because they can get contaminated just like your hands.
- It is important that anyone wearing a mask be treated with respect and not fear.

### **What is the difference between quarantine and isolation?**

- Isolation is the separation of an ill person from the general population until disease communicability is gone (i.e. they are deemed to be no longer infectious)
- Quarantine is the separation of a well person who has been potentially exposed to a communicable disease from the general population for the purposes of observation and early treatment if the disease develops. The period of quarantine for COVID-19 is 14 days.

### **Can you provide additional information on COVID-19 cases?**

- In tandem with the CDC, the cumulative number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Sacramento County will be posted on the Sacramento County Public Health website and updated every Monday: <http://covid19.saccounty.net>
- To manage resources efficiently and to protect health confidentiality, Sacramento County Public Health will not release information about residents in quarantine, under investigation or the subsequent testing.
- Additionally for health confidentiality, in compliance with HIPPA, Sacramento County Public Health does not release health or location information of individuals.