



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER ANNOUNCES FIRST DEATHS IN THE COUNTY
RELATED TO CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)**

*PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES CONFIRMS TWO (2) DEATHS FROM COVID-19 AND ONE
ADDITIONAL POSITIVE CASE FOR TOTAL OF FOURTEEN (14) IN THE COUNTY*

STOCKTON, CA (March 18, 2020) – San Joaquin County Public Health Services (PHS) is announcing the deaths of two (2) county residents from Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The individuals were among the high risk populations, elderly with underlying medical conditions. One death was travel related and the other was from community transmission. No further details about these cases will be shared due to patient privacy.

“Our hearts and sympathies go out to the loved ones of the individuals,” said Interim San Joaquin County Public Health Officer Maggie Park, M.D. “Their deaths are a sad reminder of the serious threat posed by the novel coronavirus to our most vulnerable populations.”

The total number of COVID-19 positive cases in San Joaquin County is now 14. This number is expected to continue to rise as local testing expands for novel coronavirus. Public Health Services Laboratory now has the capacity to analyze up to 60 tests per day and results are typically known within 48 hours. Additionally, commercial laboratories, such as Quest Diagnostics and LabCorp, are testing individuals who meet CDC criteria for COVID-19 testing.

“It is important that residents who may be experiencing COVID-19 symptoms contact their healthcare provider first,” said Dr. Park. “Public Health Services is not directly collecting samples from individuals. Only samples received from local healthcare providers who have screened patients with the highest medical need are being tested in our laboratory facility.”

To protect those most vulnerable (people age 65 and older and/or those with chronic medical conditions) from exposure to COVID-19, it is critical for everyone to follow these recommendations:

- If you have any COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, and shortness of breath), stay home. Most people with mild symptoms can care for themselves.
- If you are experiencing worsening symptoms and are in the high risk category, immediately contact your local healthcare provider. People should only call 911 if they feel they are in imminent danger.
- Avoid contact or maintain at least a six feet distance with anyone, especially those in the high risk category.
- Urge those age 65 and older and anyone with underlying chronic medical condition to stay away from large gatherings.
- Wash your hands often and be sure to practice good hand washing techniques.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If tissues are not available, cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow. Then wash your hands again.
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, and mouth.

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- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- If sick, stay home to reduce the exposure to others for 10 days from onset of symptoms, and await 72 hours after symptoms resolve.

“We understand this is a difficult time and our priority continues to be protecting the health of our community,” said Dr. Park. “It is evident that novel coronavirus is circulating community-wide. For this reason, everyone is part of the solution and applying social distancing is crucial in mitigating this disease.”

Additional information and guidance from Public Health Services, CDPH, and CDC is available on our website: <http://www.sjcphs.org/coronavirus>.

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