



Rebecca Nanyonjo-Kemp, DrPH
Director

Kenneth Bird, MD, MPH
Health Officer

February 27, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CDC Confirms Possible First Instance of COVID-19 Community Transmission in California

This is a constantly evolving situation; more information will be distributed as it is available. For the most up to date information, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>

On February 26, 2020, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirmed the first possible case of transmission of novel coronavirus, referred to as COVID-19, in California without any previously known exposure or travel history (referred to as possible community transmission).

The Merced County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) has been responding to COVID-19 since the outbreak was initially reported out of Wuhan, China and continues to closely monitor the situation. Surveillance methods includes monitoring suspected cases, assessing the County’s needs of equipment and supplies for healthcare and preparedness personnel, and working closely with State and Federal health officials to ensure a coordinated response in the event that is required.

Merced County continues to report NO CASES and the risk of transmission in Merced County remains low. While COVID-19 has a high transmission rate, it has a low mortality rate and international data suggests that greater than 85 percent of those who tested positive for COV-19 do not exhibit symptoms that would require hospitalization. There have been no confirmed deaths related to COVID-19 in the United States to-date and California has reported a total of nine (9) cases.

California has a strong health care system and public health infrastructure and has previously prepared for the potential spread of diseases, such as H1N1, SARS, and Ebola and is preparing to actively respond to any community spread of COVID-19. MCDPH is working with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the CDC to prepare for any further spread of COVID-19. MCDPH will distribute new information and guidance as it becomes available.

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

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- Staying away from work, school or other people if you become sick with respiratory symptoms such as fever and cough.

For more information, call the Department’s information line at (209) 381-1180 (English, Spanish, and Hmong). More information can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html>

Vicki Jones, MPA, REHS
Environmental Health Division Director

Jessica Montoya-Juarez, MS
Assistant Public Health Director

Yadira Vazquez, MBA
Assistant Public Health Director

James Clark, MICP, MHOAC
EMS Administrator