

# NEWS RELEASE



**Chief Administrative Office  
El Dorado County**

## **EL DORADO COUNTY DECLARES PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY IN RESPONSE TO NOVEL CORONAVIRUS 2019**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**(PLACERVILLE)** – El Dorado County today declared a public health emergency to ensure appropriate resources and funding are available to the County in its response to novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19).

“Although we don’t currently have any confirmed cases of the virus in El Dorado County, due to confirmed cases in the region and the high likelihood that a case will be confirmed at some point in the near future in El Dorado County, this declaration is a prudent action to take at this time,” said El Dorado County Public Health Officer, Dr. Nancy Williams. “It is a prerequisite for requesting and receiving any available federal or state funding and will allow us access to the resources necessary to keep people as safe as possible and lessen disease transmission in El Dorado County,” she added.

The declaration of a public health emergency allows the County to provide or receive mutual aid from other jurisdictions and assists in opening up available resources, mutual aid and staffing. It follows the State of California’s proclamation of emergency on March 4 regarding COVID-19.

The County continues to work closely with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) on coordinated testing, investigations, and providing guidance and assistance to health providers in monitoring for acute respiratory illness and gathering information to detect new cases for laboratory testing and confirming infection.

Earlier this week, the Public Health division provided additional guidance to local facilities such as long-term care and skilled nursing facilities that have elderly and frail older adult residents. Public Health is encouraging these sites to establish procedures including limiting and screening visitors to prevent those who are sick from entering, daily monitoring of all residents, and consulting with Public Health if issues arise.

CDPH recently released a “[Gathering Guidance](#)” document which provides recommendations regarding postponing, cancelling or limiting certain gatherings for the remainder of March. **This guidance does not apply to activities such as regular school classes, work or essential services. In accordance with that guidance, Public Health is not recommending that local El Dorado County districts close schools at this time except for postponing or cancelling non-essential large gatherings.**

In conjunction with the CDPH’s guidelines for public gatherings, Governor Newsom’s new Executive Order and its own policies guiding public health decisions, the County is considering recommendations to limit non-essential meetings and gatherings. Specific information on those changes will be provided as they are developed.

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“We are working closely with our county partners, including the Sheriff’s Office, the County Office of Education, Barton Hospital, Marshall Medical Center, emergency services providers, the Cities of Placerville and South Lake Tahoe and others to ensure the best possible unified approach to handling and communicating about this new virus under the guidance of the Governor’s Office, CDPH and the CDC,” said Dr. Williams.

Although the risk of transmission for COVID-19 remains low for the general public, Williams said it’s important for individuals to notify their healthcare provider to determine whether testing is indicated if they have one of the following risk factors:

- Recent travel to mainland China, Italy, Iran, Japan and South Korea or other countries with active COVID-19 (within the last 14 days) and having respiratory symptoms
- Close contact with a person confirmed through a laboratory test to have COVID-19

While there is no vaccine for COVID-19, Williams stressed the ways to minimize risk from any respiratory viruses, including COVID-19:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Public Health and healthcare providers are following CDC guidance regarding how to assess individuals, and when to conduct a laboratory confirmed COVID-19 test. According to Dr. Williams, some individuals, based on CDC criteria, may not be tested. All tests for COVID-19 conducted in El Dorado County to date have been negative.

Residents are urged to visit El Dorado County’s Public Health [website](#) for regular updates about COVID-19.

A copy of the declaration is attached and can be found on the website.

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