

April 16, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Mike North, 209-726-2744

COVID-19 DAILY STATUS REPORT (AFTERNOON UPDATE)

PLEASE NOTE: This is an evolving situation. More information will be distributed as it becomes available. For the most up to date information, please visit: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus. Additional information is available at www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus.

CURRENT STATUS:

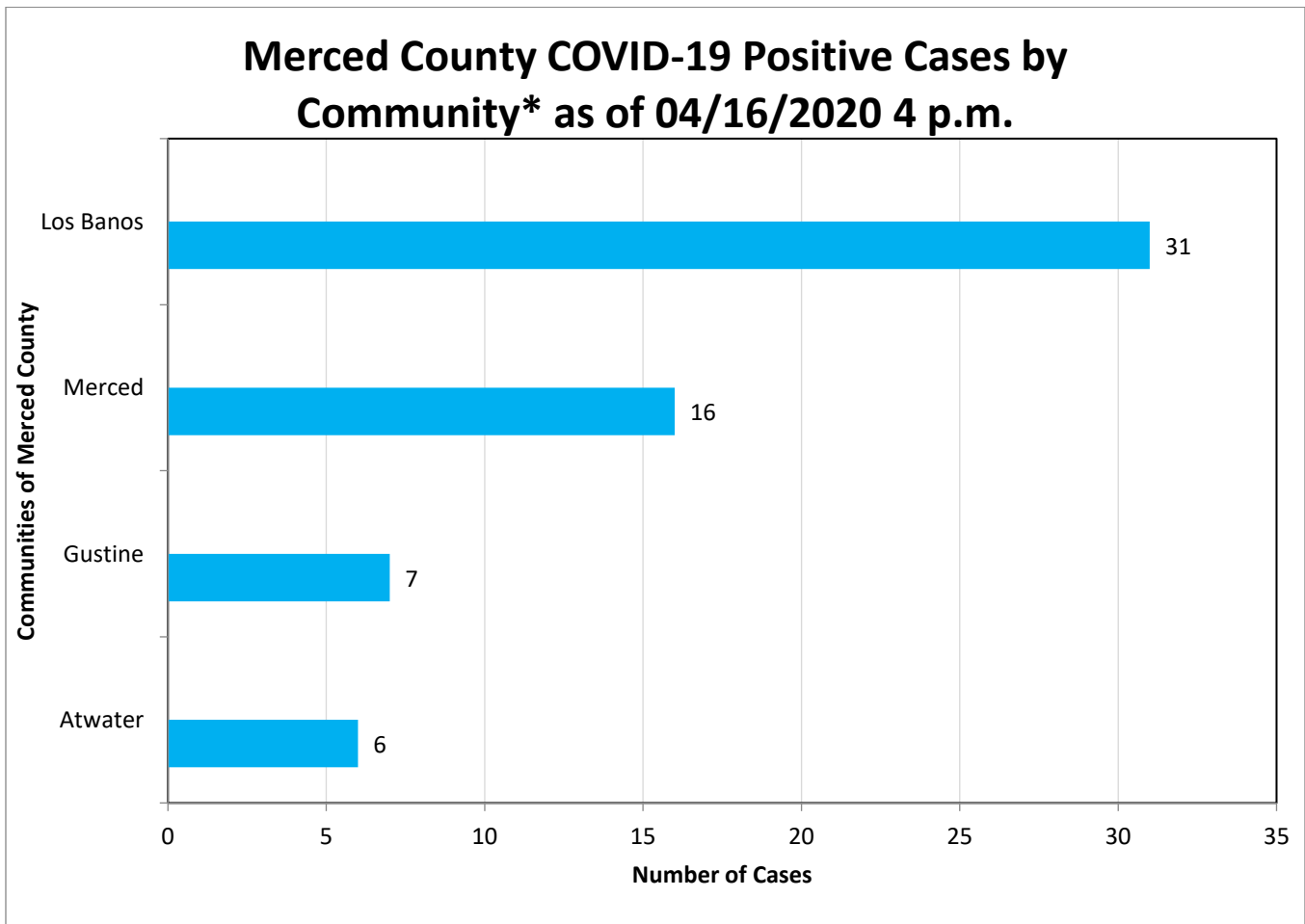
- As of 4 p.m. Thursday, April 16, 2020, there are 82 confirmed cases (51 active) of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) in Merced County. Of that number, 28 have recovered and three have died.

TOTAL COVID-19 CASE COUNT FOR MERCED COUNTY			
Current as of 4 p.m., April 16, 2020			
# Confirmed	# Active	# Recovered	# Deaths
82*	51	28**	3
CASE SUMMARY DETAILS			
EXPOSURE TYPE	East County	West County	
Acquired Out of Jurisdiction	15	6	
Community Spread	10	7	
Healthcare Exposure***	6	15	
Known Exposure	9	13	
Under Investigation	0	1	
GENDER	East County	West County	
Female	19	28	
Male	21	14	
AGE	East County	West County	
<18 years	1	2	
18-49	23	29	
50-64	11	9	
65+	5	2	

Notes:

- *Total confirmed cases include total recovered and total deaths.
- **Recovered defined as symptom free with no medication for 72 hours.
- ***Healthcare exposure includes exposure in and out of jurisdiction.
- East Merced County includes: Atwater, Ballico, Bear Creek, Calpack, Cressey, Delhi, El Nido, Hilmar, Irwin, Le Grand, Livingston, Merced, Planada, Snelling, Stevinson, Tuttle, and Winton
- West Merced County includes: Dos Palos, Gustine, Los Banos, Santa Nella, and Volta

- Community-Specific Reporting:** Due to privacy laws, Merced County had not released a community-specific breakdown of positive cases until Monday, April 13. Due to a relatively low number of positive cases and the size of some of our cities and unincorporated communities, previously releasing those numbers could have been an identifying factor and a breach of patient confidentiality. Furthermore, releasing that type of data could have also created a false sense of security in communities without confirmed cases, leading to greater spread of COVID-19. However, similar to other neighboring counties, Merced County has now reached a high enough case total that patient confidentiality is no longer considered a major risk for communities that have five or more cases. For that reason, we are now releasing community-specific numbers for those that have five or more cases:



Note: *Only communities with five or more cases are reported in this graph.

- Based on information provided by individuals who test positive, Public Health staff will continue to assess risks of exposure and contact any affected individuals.
- Due to privacy laws, the Public Health Department cannot release identifying information related to positive cases.
- In California, there are 27,199 confirmed cases and 893 deaths.

RECENT ACTIVITIES & UPDATES:

- Merced County Public Health continues to coordinate with federal, state and local partners to further prepare us for future impacts. This includes working with the California Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to monitor COVID-19.

- In coordination with the Merced County Office of Emergency Services, daily situational status calls continued this week with local government agencies, schools, and healthcare professionals in our community.
- Public Health provided a COVID-19 update to the Board of Supervisors during its regular meeting on Tuesday, April 14. That update can be viewed here: <https://mercedcountyca.new.swagit.com/videos/51813>
- The Merced County COVID-19 information webpage, www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus, continues to be updated on a daily basis.
- Residential and commercial real estate services, including settlement services, are considered essential critical infrastructure per Merced County Health Order issued on April 8, 2020, number 12, section f, subsection (i), as defined under the category of “Other Community, or Government Based Operations and Essential Functions” by the United States Department of Homeland Security, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). To view the CISA Memorandum on Identification of Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers during COVID-19 Response visit: www.cisa.gov/publication/guidance-essential-critical-infrastructure-workforce. The California Association of Realtors has a website, www.carcovidupdates.org/, dedicated to providing COVID-19 related information and resources for real estate agents, home buyers, home sellers and renters. The following resources, and more, are available:
 - Guidelines for Real Estate Best Practices During COVID-19: www.carcovidupdates.org/best-practices-guidelines?src=redalert
 - Information on recent news items that could impact real estate transactions and resources to help agents navigate transactions during the California coronavirus outbreak: www.carcovidupdates.org/your-transactions
 - Resources: www.carcovidupdates.org/resources
- Merced County hosted a “Small Business Resources” webinar today (April 16), covering resources currently available to small business owners and non-profit organizations amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - For those unable to attend the webinar, a recording will soon be posted to www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus under the “video” tab as well as www.facebook.com/MercedCounty.
- In response to the most recent Health Order from the Merced County Public Health Officer, the Merced County Library ended its “Curb Side Pick-Up” program Wednesday, April 15 in order to further encourage people to stay at home and limit public contact. The Library is encouraging the public to utilize the many online library services available at www.countyofmerced.com/library. The Merced County Library has extended all due dates for materials currently checked out and has suspended late fees until the end of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Merced County Office of Emergency Services and Merced County Department of Public Health proclaimed a local and public health emergency March 13 in order to help address the outbreak. The Board of Supervisors ratified those actions during a March 16 special meeting.
- On March 19, Governor Gavin Newsom announced Executive Order N-33-20, asking California residents to stay at home. On March 20, Merced County’s Health Officer also issued an Order directing County residents to remain in their places of residence except to perform or receive essential services.
- The Merced County Public Health Department Operations Center was opened Jan. 27, 2020 (81 days) in order to prepare for COVID-19 in and around our community. The Merced County Emergency Operations Center is activated at a Level 1.

COVID-19 TESTING UPDATE:

- Within the public health system, every person who has met CDC criteria for severe disease within Merced County has been tested. Testing has been limited across the state of California, as noted multiple times by state officials as a barrier to response.
- Public Health is actively identifying other methods to enhance testing capability for providers throughout the community and increase testing county-wide. We will continue to be notified should positive tests come through either system (public health or commercial).
- In late March, Merced County opened two “mobile specimen collection sites” for COVID-19 in order to streamline testing capabilities. Initially, there will be two collection days per week, one on the westside of the County, and one on the eastside of the County. Each site will remain open for four hours per day. Additional hours per day and days per week may become more frequent if supply and personnel availability increase.
 - **PLEASE NOTE:** Use of these mobile specimen collection sites are by appointment only, and you must have a prescription from a physician and prior approval from the Merced County Department of Public Health. If you do not have a provider and have symptoms call 209-381-1180 for a phone consultation. Anyone without prior approval will not be tested. Locations will be provided to clients once appointments are made. Call 209-381-1180 for more information.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Coronavirus symptoms include: mild to severe respiratory illness, fever, cough and difficulty breathing. If symptoms develop, individuals should stay at home to limit exposure to others.
- Anyone who has had contact with a person with possible COVID-19 infection and has the above symptoms should call his/her local health department/health care provider immediately.
- Do not go to your provider’s office without calling ahead. Do not call 911 for suspected COVID-19 unless you are having a medical emergency.
- During the flu season, there are steps you can take to protect your health and the health of those around you:
 - Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - Stay away from work, school or other people if you become sick with respiratory symptoms such as fever and cough.
 - Cover sneezes or coughs with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- **Sign up for COVID-19 alerts:**www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus
- Merced County Public Health COVID-19 **Information Webpage:**
 - www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus
- Merced County Public Health **Information Line:**
 - 209-381-1180 (English, Spanish, and Hmong. Live reps. available 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)
- **Email** COVID-19-specific questions to Merced County Public Health:
 - COVID19@countyofmerced.com.
- Updated **CDC Information:**
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/whats-new-all.html>
- **CDC Resources for Households:**
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/index.html>
- How to **talk to your kids** about the coronavirus:
 - <https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-coronavirus>

- Guidance for **Businesses and Employers:**
 - <https://bit.ly/2IH2G2u>
 - www.covid19.ca.gov
- Report **Price Gouging:**
 - <http://www.countyofmerced.com/3381/Price-Gouging>
- Report **Consumer Fraud:**
 - www.countyofmerced.com/2322/Consumer-Fraud
- Report **non-essential business activity** and large group gatherings that violate the Stay-at-Home Order:
 - Hotline: 209-381-1100 (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday)
 - Email: COVIDcomplaint@countyofmerced.com
- **Free Virtual Care** options through Dignity Health for those with COVID-19 symptoms:
 - Patients can receive a free Virtual Care Anywhere visit if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Symptoms can include fever, cough, or shortness of breath.
 - To access a free virtual urgent care visit, visit www.dignityhealth.org/virtualcareanywhere, download the Virtual Care Anywhere app in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store, or call 855-356-8053 and use the coupon code COVID19.
- **Get Help/Give Help:**
 - www.gethelpgivehelpmerced.com
- **Donations**—help community members impacted by COVID-19:
 - www.countyofmerced.com/donations
- Exclusive **Shopping for Vulnerable Populations:**
 - www.countyofmerced.com/3396/Exclusive-Shopping-for-Vulnerable-Popula
- Make and donate **face masks:**
 - www.rccmercedcounty.org

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