

April 30, 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:

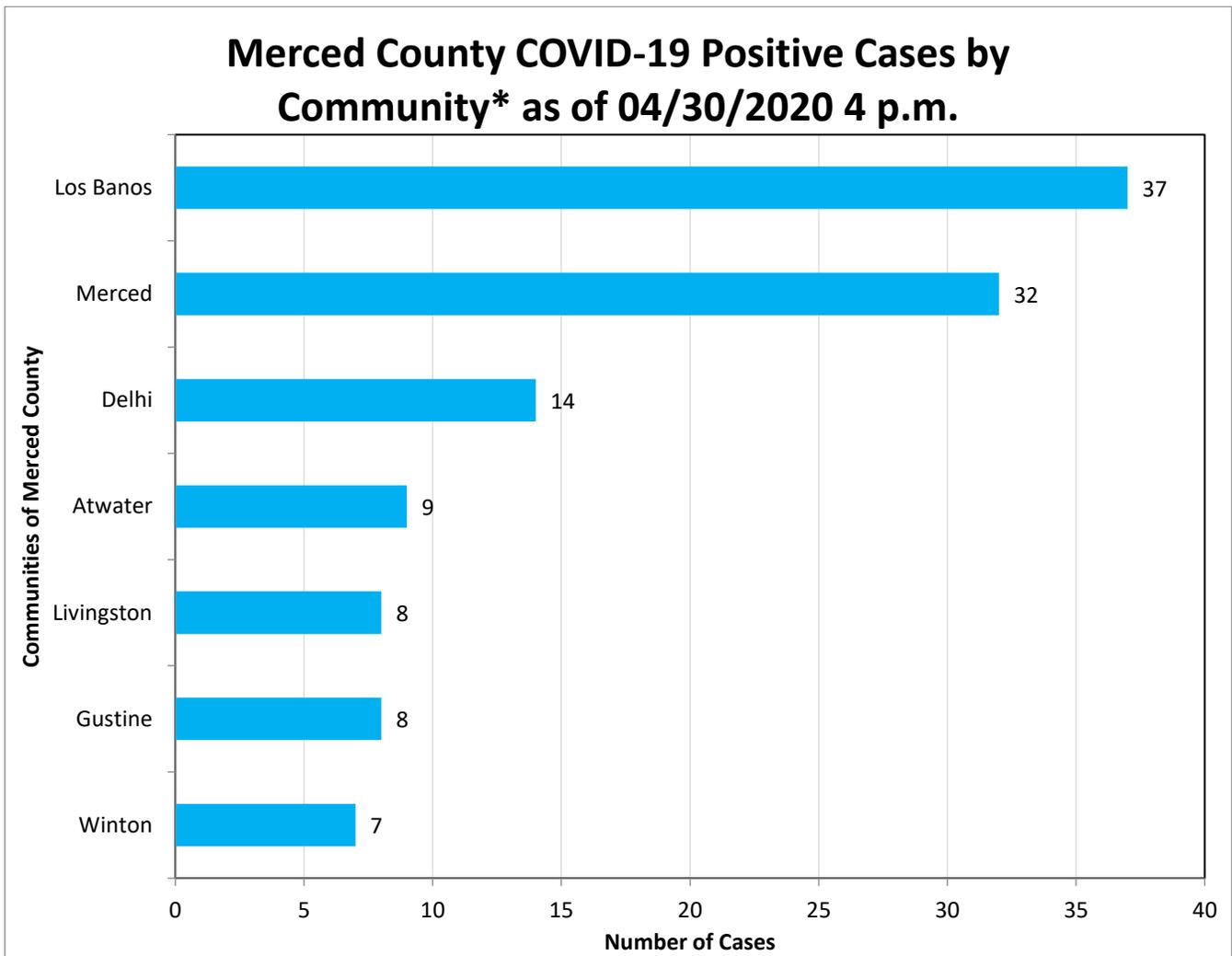
- As of 4 p.m. Thursday, April 30, 2020, there are 131 confirmed cases (48 active) of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) in Merced County. Of that number, 80 have recovered and three have died.

TOTAL COVID-19 CASE COUNT FOR MERCED COUNTY			
Current as of 4 p.m., April 30, 2020			
# Confirmed*	# Active	# Recovered**	# Deaths
131	48	East County: 39 West County: 41	3
CASE SUMMARY DETAILS			
EXPOSURE TYPE	East County	West County	
Acquired Out of Jurisdiction	23	7	
Community Spread	17	10	
Healthcare Exposure***	17	19	
Known Exposure	21	13	
Under Investigation	4	0	
GENDER	East County	West County	
Female	44	32	
Male	38	17	
AGE	East County	West County	
<18 years	1	2	
18-49	43	33	
50-64	19	10	
65+	19	4	

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. The figures in this chart represent confirmed cases, which includes active cases, recoveries, and deaths.*

- 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 49,982 confirmed cases and 2,023 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, situational status calls continued this week with local government agencies, schools, and healthcare professionals in our community.
- In response to feedback from the local business and agricultural community, the Health Officer is temporarily suspending Section 5 of the most recent Public Health Order from April 24, 2020 regarding essential businesses and additional COVID-19 precautionary measures until further clarification can be developed. Section 5, which was scheduled to become effective Friday, May 1, required businesses to develop a "Social Distancing and Safety Plan." This Plan included several elements to help slow the spread of COVID-19, including limited capacity (five people per 1,000 square feet), door monitoring to ensure proper numbers, cloth face masks for employees and patrons, telecommuting options, employee screening, and several others. The rest of the Health Order remains in effect. While Section 5 is suspended, Merced County will reevaluate that portion of the Order and its requirements to better allow local businesses to improve their COVID-19 safety protocols without overburdening their essential operations. Additional guidance documents will also be developed and provided to businesses as they look to follow the updated Health Order. Read the full press release at www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus (under updates/press releases).
- Public Health provided a COVID-19 update to the Board of Supervisors during its regular meeting on Tuesday, April 28. That update can be viewed here: www.mercedcountyca.new.swagit.com/videos/56604
- The Merced County COVID-19 information webpage, www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus, continues to be updated on a daily basis.
- 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 activated Jan. 27, 2020 (95 days) in order to prepare for COVID-19 in and around our community. The Merced County Emergency Operations Center and Human Services Agency Department Operations Center are also currently active.

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.
- As of today, 2,122 tests have been performed in Merced County: 1,705 negatives, 131 positives, and 286 still pending. This figure includes testing through both the commercial and public health lab systems.
- 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.
- Following Governor Gavin Newsom’s recent announcement to add more community testing sites across the state focused on underserved communities, Merced County launched a new testing site in the City of Merced today, April 30. This new site is one of 80 testing sites powered through a partnership with OptumServe, the federal government health services business of Optum, a leading health services innovation company. Testing is by appointment only, and information will soon be released on how to schedule an appointment. Moving forward, the site will be available five days a week and is expected to increase our local testing capacity by more than 100 tests a day.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Coronavirus symptoms include: mild to severe respiratory illness, fever, cough, difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and loss of taste or smell. 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
- Apply for **benefits**— Individuals experiencing financial hardship may qualify for cash assistance through CalWORKs, food nutrition assistance through CalFresh, and medical assistance through MediCal.:
 - www.getcalfresh.org (CalFresh only)
 - www.C4yourself.com (CalWORKs and MediCal)
 - 1-855-421-6770
- **Unemployment Insurance** questions to local Merced County EDD Office:
 - WSBModestoFieldOffice@edd.ca.gov
- Information regarding **tenant protections:**
 - www.countyofmerced.com/3412/Real-Estate
- 24/7 **Warm Line for Youth** (emotional support):
 - 209-381-6800 or 1-888-334-0163 (toll free)
 - Additional Behavioral Health resources: www.countyofmerced.com/3395/Behavioral-Health-Resources

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