

July 20, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

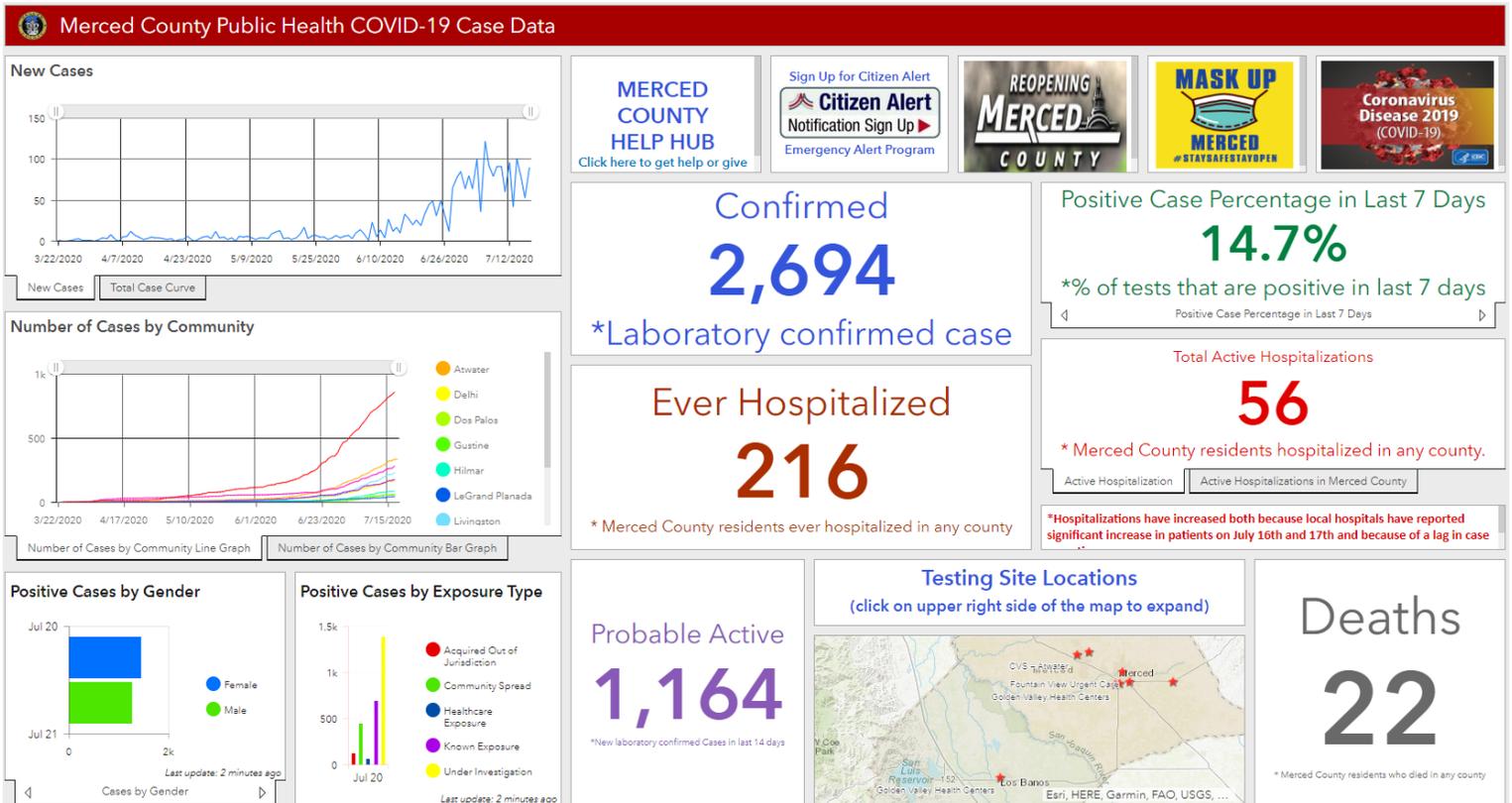
CONTACT: Mike North, 209-726-2744

COVID-19 DAILY STATUS REPORT

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. These status reports are released daily on normal business days. Statistics will continue to be updated on weekdays at www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirusstats.

CURRENT STATUS:

- As of 3:30 p.m. Monday, July 20, 2020, there are 2,694 confirmed cases (+291 from Friday) of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) in Merced County. Approximately 1,164 of those cases are active, and 22 have died.
- Please see "COVID-19 Testing Update" section for the most recent testing figures.



- View this interactive dashboard online at:** www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirusstats
- 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 384,667 confirmed cases and 7,700 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.
- Today, the Merced County Department of Public Health confirmed seven additional deaths related to COVID-19:
 - Gender:
 - Female: 6
 - Male: 1
 - Age:
 - 50-64: 3
 - 65+: 4
 - Underlying Health Conditions:
 - Yes: 2
 - No: 1
 - Unknown: 4
- Today, the Health Officer issued an amended Health Order, which is available at www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus. The updated Order incorporates elements from the California State Public Health Officer Order issued July 13, 2020.
- Have you been counted? Due to COVID-19, the U.S. Census Bureau has extended the deadline for completing the Census until Oct. 31. Participating in the Census is critically important to ensure our County gets its fair share of Federal and State funding. Please take a few minutes to respond: www.2020census.gov. For additional information about the Census, you can visit www.facebook.com/MercedCounty or search #MercedCensus2020 on social media.
- Recently, information was misrepresented in a statewide publication claiming Merced County is no longer conducting contact tracing in response to COVID-19. The Merced County Department of Public Health continues to conduct contact tracing as required by the State. This includes contacting all positive cases and conducting a robust contact interview including:
 1. Providing verbal instructions to isolate,
 2. Identifying the suspected source of disease exposure,
 3. Identifying all places visited during the case's infectious period,
 4. Identifying all people in contact during the case's infectious period,
 5. Providing information on how cases can notify people they've come into contact, and
 6. Providing resources and information to the cases.

Public Health also contacts affected employers when one of their employees tests positive, and resources and technical assistance are provided to these employers. The California Department of Public Health confirmed on Thursday, July 16, 2020 that Merced County is meeting its contact tracing requirements.

In addition, Merced County is actively looking to improve upon its contact tracing abilities through the hiring of 21 new extra-help contact tracer-investigators. So far, Merced County is in the process of filling 11 of those positions with bilingual individuals. These new positions are funded by a \$400,000 grant.

The Merced County Department of Public Health remains committed to providing our community with the best possible services during this difficult time. Our mission to promote, protect, and preserve healthy living and safe environments is perhaps more pertinent now than ever. As we have from the onset of this crisis, we will continue to work closely with

Federal, State and local partners to identify ways to address the current situation and prepare us for future impacts.

- Merced County has been placed on the State monitoring list due to rapidly increasing disease transmission, increased hospitalizations, and a rise in the percentage of individuals testing positive for COVID-19, indicating increased circulation throughout the community. Further details can be found at: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/CountyMonitoringDataStep2.aspx>
- In an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19 by preventing large group gatherings, the County’s regional parks (Lake Yosemite, Hagaman Park and Henderson Park) will be closed on Saturdays and Sundays until further notice. The parks will remain open on weekdays, but physical distancing must be adhered to and large group gatherings will continue to be prohibited.
- 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 (176 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:

- As of July 14, a total of 19,885 tests have been performed in Merced County: 17,403 negatives, 2,183 positives, and 299 still pending. These figures include testing through both the commercial and public health lab systems. (Testing figures reported on a weekly basis.)

Testing Site	Location	Registration
Golden Valley Health Centers	645 Seventh St, Los Banos	1-866-682-4842 www.gvhc.org
Golden Valley Health Centers	857 W. Childs Ave., Merced	1-866-682-4842 www.gvhc.org
OptumServ Site	900 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr, Merced	1-888-634-1123 or online at www.lhi.care/covidtesting .
CVS – Merced	1970 Yosemite Pkwy, Merced	https://bit.ly/3e9kaS4
CVS – Atwater	1651 Bellevue Rd, Atwater	https://bit.ly/3e9kaS4
Fountain View Urgent Care	374 W. Olive Ave. # A, Merced	209-384-5766
Castle Family Health Urgent Care	3605 Hospital Rd, Atwater	209-381-2000

San Joaquin Drug	9215 E, CA-140, Planada	209-382-1291
Verily – Los Banos	Los Banos Fairgrounds: 403 F St., Los Banos	www.projectbaseline.com/COVID19

- Within the public health system, every person who has met CDC criteria for severe disease within Merced County has been tested.
- 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).

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.
 - Wear a face covering when in public.

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
- 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
- **Reopen Merced County**:
 - www.reopenmercedcounty.com
 - www.reopenmercedcounty.com/survey
 - COVID-19 Reopen Merced County Fund: www.ReopenMercedCounty.com/RMCFund

###