

December 18, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

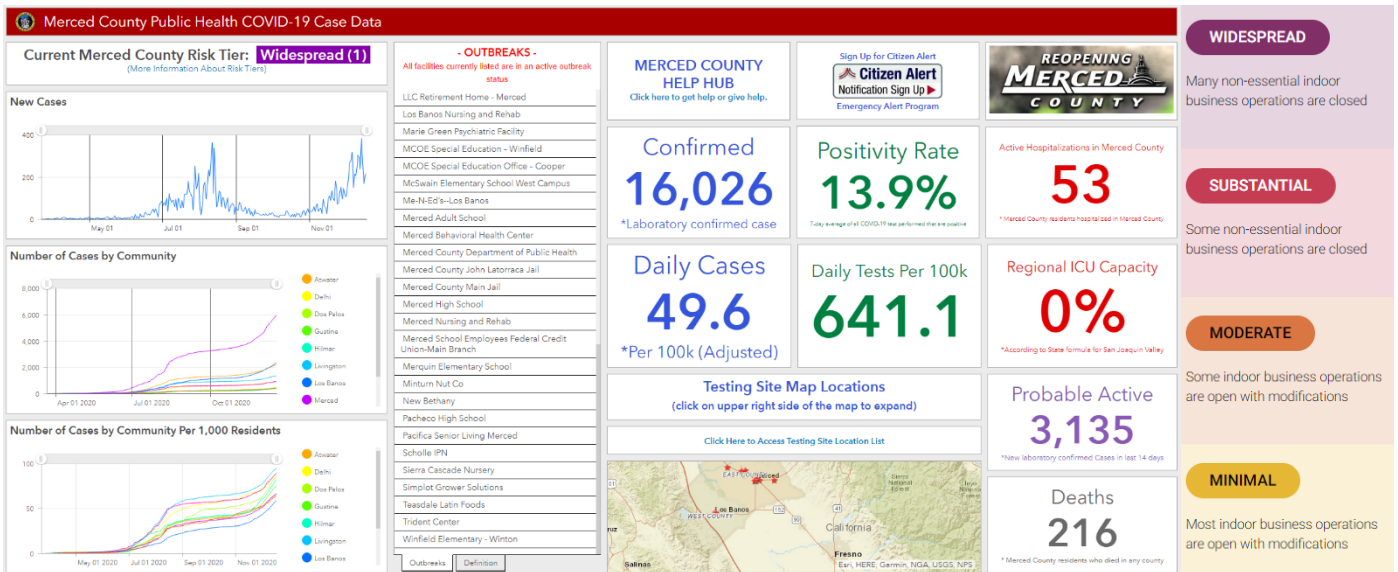
MEDIA CONTACT: covid19media@countyofmerced.com

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. Friday, December 18, 2020, there are 16,026 confirmed cases (+215 from Thursday) of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) in Merced County. Approximately 3,135 of those cases are active, and 216 have died.
- Current Risk Tier: Purple (Widespread).** Many non-essential indoor business operations are closed.
 - Tiers are determined by the California Department of Public Health based on test positivity and adjusted case rate. Counties can move into more or less restrictive tiers based on these factors. Weekly tiers are updated on Tuesdays. More information: www.covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/



View this interactive dashboard online at:

Desktop: English: <http://dashboard-desktop.reopenmercedcounty.com> Spanish: <http://dashboard-desktop-spanish.reopenmercedcounty.com>
Mobile: English: <http://dashboard-mobile.reopenmercedcounty.com> Spanish: <http://dashboard-mobile-spanish.reopenmercedcounty.com>

- 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 1,723,362 confirmed cases and 21,860 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.
- A limited number of COVID-19 vaccines have arrived in Merced County and will be administered beginning today (Friday). Additional doses will be delivered in the coming days and weeks. The first to receive the vaccine will include frontline workers and at-risk populations. Learn more: <https://www.facebook.com/MercedCounty/videos/789281525135658>
- Changes to COVID-19 Dashboard: In order to make the COVID-19 Dashboard more useful for the public and streamlined for staff, some of the lesser-used items (some of which are available through other platforms) were removed, while other elements were added. The changes will better align the dashboard with State data/tier requirements. For additional statistics provided by the State, please visit <https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/#county-status>.
- Today, the Merced County Department of Public Health confirmed 10 additional deaths related to COVID-19 (since Dec. 13):
 - Gender:
 - Female: 4
 - Male: 6
 - Age:
 - 35-49: 2
 - 50-64: 1
 - 65+: 7
 - Underlying Health Conditions:
 - Yes: 6
 - No: 0
 - Unknown: 4
- Mobile Testing Sites to Provide Additional COVID-19 Testing in Merced County: www.countyofmerced.com/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=1955
- Visit the link below to access Merced County Public Health's blueprint for businesses to help better understand the different tiers and the activities allowed under each tier.
 - <https://www.co.merced.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/25797/COVID-19-Risk-Determination-Chart>
- 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.
- The Merced County Public Health Department Operations Center was activated Jan. 27, 2020 (327 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:

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
CVS – Livingston	474 Winton Parkway, Livingston, CA 95334	209-394-6785 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 **business activities and large group gatherings** that violate the Stay Safe to Stay Open Health Order:
 - Information Line: 209-381-1180 (8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday – Friday)
 - Email: COVID19@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

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