



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 2, 2020

Contact: Rohish Lal (707) 565-6625

Rohish.Lal@sonoma-county.org

Local Emergency Declared After New COVID-19 Case

The patient recently returned from a cruise, unrelated to Diamond Princess Cruise Ship

SANTA ROSA, CA – The Sonoma County Department of Health Services (DHS) today confirmed a presumptive positive case of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in a resident with recent international travel unrelated to the Diamond Princess Cruise Ship.

A presumptive positive case is defined as likely to be positive for COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will conduct another test to confirm the diagnosis.

This patient has symptoms of the virus, and is currently in stable condition in an isolation room at a local hospital. The patient, who recently returned from a cruise ship that departed from San Francisco to Mexico, has been in the County for 10 days.

Tests conducted by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and in close coordination with the CDC, County and hospital officials led to the presumptive positive diagnosis.

DHS, CDPH, CDC and hospital officials are currently in the process of identifying individuals this patient has had contact with during the time they were in the community before being hospitalized.

The names of the hospitals providing care for individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 will not be disclosed to protect the privacy of patients and prevent disruption of hospital operations.

This is the second case of COVID-19 in the County in the last week, which was announced on February 25, 2020. The hospital and County health officials are working closely with the CDC and CDPH to ensure the patients receive excellent care and that all procedures are followed to protect the community from COVID-19.

County Declares Health and Local Emergency to Respond to COVID-19

To respond to this most recent development, the County of Sonoma has declared a Local Public Health Emergency as well as a Local Emergency to respond to COVID-19. These proclamations will allow the County to prepare to respond for the possibility of community spread of COVID-19. This includes a partial activation of the County Emergency Operations Center to support necessary activities.

These proclamations empower the County to more effectively respond to the outbreak, seek and utilize mutual aid, potentially obtain reimbursement, coordinate communications with stakeholders and the community. The proclamations will also ensure that the County's public health professionals have all necessary tools at their disposal to keep the community safe.

The Local Emergency and Public Health Emergency will be considered for ratification by the Board of Supervisors this week at special meeting on COVID-19 at a yet to be determined date.

DHS is working closely with CDPH and the CDC to monitor these cases of COVID-19 in our County. The Department continues to work closely with local public health partners/healthcare providers to take action to isolate and test any high-risk individuals in consultation with the CDC to prevent the spread of disease and protect the public's health.

“This recent presumptive positive case of COVID-19 is a cause for concern, and the County is declaring these emergencies to activate and deploy its resources to adequately respond to an increase of cases,” said Health Officer Dr. Celeste Philip. “They will allow us to work in tandem with our cities and health care providers to ensure we are prepared to combat an outbreak of COVID-19 in our communities.”

On February 28, Dr. Philip sent out a Health Alert to local health care providers with updated guidance on how to screen for possible cases of COVID-19.

The County is currently awaiting test kits for COVID-19 to be used at its public health lab to be more responsive when there are suspected cases, and have a better understanding of what is happening in our communities.

County residents should contact their healthcare providers if they have symptoms such as fever and cough and had close contact with someone with symptoms who returned in the last 14 days from China, Italy, Iran, Japan, or South Korea.

Important Information to Remember

DHS encourages everyone to practice good hygiene to reduce your risk of becoming infected with a respiratory virus, such as influenza or COVID-19, which includes:

- washing hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds,
- avoid touching your eyes and face,
- coughing or sneezing into your sleeved elbow,
- and staying home when ill.
- If you have not received your flu shot yet, it's not too late; annual flu shots are the best protection from flu, which still sickens and kills thousands of people in the US every year.

For more information, go to the coronavirus website here:

<https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Health/Information-About-Coronavirus/>

###