



# Sonoma County

Key Messages: 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

March 12, 2020, 5:00pm

## Priority messages for today:

- **No new cases of coronavirus in Sonoma County since March 5.** Sonoma County currently has **three** Coronavirus cases. All patients are in isolation rooms and being treated in local hospitals. [Cases are being tracked online here.](#)
- **Coronavirus Testing.** Testing for Coronavirus is now available through local commercial laboratories. Currently all testing is conducted through healthcare providers, based on their clinical determination that a patient has symptoms and/or history of exposure to a known case of coronavirus. Wide-spread testing is not yet available. The Department of Health Services Public Health laboratory is also testing priority cases.
- **Proactive Testing.** The County of Sonoma is taking a proactive approach to testing for coronavirus in our community. In addition to testing ordered by local healthcare providers, the County will be conducting an “enhanced surveillance” program to test between 60 and 80 patients with flu-like symptoms. Half of these patients will have underlying medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes or compromised immune systems. The other half will be healthy other than their flu-like symptoms. This testing will take place at three to four medical facilities dispersed throughout the county, potentially including urgent care centers, clinics, and hospital emergency departments. The purpose of this proactive program, which is scheduled to begin by Friday March 13, is to gather data to more quickly determine if the coronavirus is being transmitted from person to person in Sonoma County. This testing program remains consistent with current CDC and CDHP recommendations on who should be tested.
- **Updated Guidelines for Mass Gatherings**
  - On 3/11/20, California Gov. Gavin Newsome issued an updated policy saying “non-essential” gatherings such as sporting events, concerts and conferences should be postponed or canceled until at least the end of March.
  - On 3/11/20, Sonoma County Health Officer advised cancelling or postponing non-essential indoor gatherings of 50 people or more for older adults over the age of 60, and those with chronic medical conditions.  
*Update will be issued on 3/13/20.*
- **Spanish Language Virtual Town Hall will be next Tuesday, March 17, 5-6pm on KBBF 89.1.** Press release and promotion will take place today.
- **3/12/20 Virtual Town Hall on Coronavirus.** The County of Sonoma held a virtual town hall meeting last night on KRCB Northern California Public Media. If you missed it, we encourage you to watch the hour-long meeting to learn more



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about the Coronavirus and how the County is responding. [You may view it here.](#) A Spanish translated version will be available soon.

- **SoCoEmergency.org** is the official County website for centralized information about the current coronavirus emergency.
- **2-1-1 Sonoma Information & Resource Hotline** is a number for the public to call for information and resources on the County's response to the Coronavirus. In addition to calling, people can call 2-1-1 or text their zip code to 898-211 to be connected with a call taker.
- **We are prepared:** Our public health infrastructure and expertise in Sonoma County is second to none. We are working closely with the CDC, the CDPH, and our local health system to help keep our community safe from the spread of coronavirus.
- **Important Health Reminders:** Continue to practice good hygiene to reduce your risk of becoming infected with a respiratory virus. Follow basic preventative measures like thoroughly washing your hands, staying home from school or work when sick, and disinfecting surfaces often. Throw disinfecting wipes in the trash, don't flush them down the toilet. If you are ill and need medical attention, call your medical provider for guidance.

## Mass Gatherings & Public Safety

- California Gov. Gavin Newsom urged an end to gatherings of more than 250 people to counter the spread of new coronavirus, a move he said would cause "real stress" for many people and businesses but save lives. Newsom said California public health officials late Wednesday issued [an updated policy](#) saying "**non-essential**" gatherings such as sporting events, concerts and conferences should be postponed or canceled until at least the end of March.
- In an abundance of caution to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19), the **Sonoma County Health Officer advises cancelling or postponing non-essential indoor gatherings of 50 people or more for older adults over the age of 60, and those with chronic medical conditions.** The recommendation will last two weeks, starting on March 11, 2020 and may be re-evaluated at that time, based on the ongoing need for public safety. [Read press release here.](#)

### What can be done to make a gathering safer if it is essential or small?

- Stagger activities.
- Add frequency of an event to spread out attendance, e.g. hold more, smaller



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gatherings.

- Add distance between where individuals sit or stand around tables.
- Add additional hand washing stations and restrooms.
- Limit the number of people in lines.
- Avoid direct physical contact, such as hand-shaking, holding hands, and hugging.
- Extend hours to allow for staggering of attendance or participation.
- Use phones, videos or video conferencing to reduce the need for close interactions.
- Consider ways to encourage anyone with fever and respiratory symptoms to stay home when sick, such as
  - Offering refunds or support reselling of tickets for persons who become ill.
  - Placing messages on websites, tickets, and venue entrances reminding people to protect one another by staying home if sick.

### Testing FAQs:

#### How can I take a test to see if I have coronavirus?

Currently wide-spread testing to individuals without flu-like symptoms is not available. If you do have flu-like symptoms, you should contact your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider can order coronavirus testing.

#### Is the County prepared for more cases?

Yes. The priority is to conduct public health surveillance to determine the extent of local spread. The County's Department of Health Services (DHS) is closely monitoring the results from expanded testing to determine if the virus is spreading in the community. DHS continues to consult with public health colleagues from the California Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for assistance. DHS will continue to work with them and other partners to respond to cases, to trace contacts, and to understand what is going on in our community. The County Emergency Operations Center is activated. Colleagues from across county government are helping with the response.

#### What should someone do if they don't have a doctor or insurance and they are experiencing symptoms of coronavirus?

- If someone does not have a provider or insurance they should call a community health center nearest them. A list of numbers can be found at: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Health/Disease-Control/Community-Clinics/>
- All Commercial & Medi-Cal Health Plans Regulated By Department of Managed Health Care Will Eliminate Cost-Sharing For Medically Necessary Testing. <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPA/Pages/NR20-012.aspx>. Additionally, Medicare Medical Insurance covers a test to see if you have Coronavirus. This



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test is covered when your doctor or a health care provider orders it.

<https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/coronavirus-test>

## Do Medi-Cal or private medical insurance plans cover testing for Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

- On March 5, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom declared, “We have ordered health insurance companies to waive ALL out-of-pocket costs for preventive coronavirus testing.” California is the latest state to order insurance companies to waive out-of-pocket costs for coronavirus testing.
- All commercial and Medi-Cal health plans have eliminated out of pocket costs for all medically necessary screening and testing for the COVID-19. This includes waiving cost-sharing for emergency room, urgent care or provider office visits when the purpose of the visit is to be screened and tested for COVID-19.

## Recent Updates:

**Sonoma County currently has three Coronavirus cases. No new cases since March 5, 2020:**

- **No new cases:** At this time, no new cases have been reported in Sonoma County.
- The Grand Princess cruise ship docked in Port of Oakland on March 9, and CalOES is leading the effort to quarantine and hospitalize patients as needed. Sonoma County has not yet been asked to take any new patients from this cruise ship.
- There are three cases of coronavirus in Sonoma County. All patients are in isolation rooms and being treated in local hospitals.
  - On February 25, 2020, a confirmed positive patient with coronavirus was transferred to a Sonoma County hospital from Travis Air Force Base in Solano County. That person had been quarantined at the base for a short time after returning from the Diamond Princess cruise ship in Japan.
  - On March 2, 2020, the Sonoma County Department of Health Services (DHS) confirmed a presumptive positive case of novel coronavirus in a Sonoma County resident with recent international travel on the Grand Princess (Princess Cruises) to Mexico.
  - On March 5, 2020, the County confirmed a second presumptive positive case of novel coronavirus in a resident who traveled on the same Grand Princess cruise.



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- A total of 78 County residents traveled on the Grand Princess cruise ship. Of the 78 residents on the cruise ship, approximately 25 took a shuttle to the Sonoma County Airport on February 21.
- Both of the presumptive positive COVID-19 patients were passengers on the shuttle to the airport.
- DHS contacted all Sonoma County residents who were on the Grand Princess Cruise and did not find any additional cases of coronavirus.
- The 14-day window of risk from exposure related to the cruise ship to Mexico ended on March 6, 2020 and no additional passengers were found to test positive for coronavirus in Sonoma County.

Presumptive Positive COVID-19 Patients (from Grand Princess Cruise)	Confirmed Positive Patient (from Travis AFB; non-County Resident)	Total in Sonoma County
2	1	3

### State Guidance for Homeless Individuals

- The California Department of Public Health released new guidance for homeless individuals and the providers who treat them. The latest [CDPH news release](#) provides some context, and the document can be found here: [Guidance to Prepare and Protect Homeless Californians and Service Providers from COVID-19](#)

### State of California Declared an Emergency to Respond to Coronavirus:

- On March 3, 2020 Governor Newsom declared a State of Emergency to help the state prepare for broader spread of coronavirus. This proclamation includes increased protections against price gouging, offers more assistance to local governments, and allows health care workers to come from out of state. You can read the proclamation at:

<https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/03/04/governor-newsom-declares-state-of-emergency-to-help-state-prepare-for-broader-spread-of-covid-19/>

### District Attorney Ravitch Warns Against Price Gouging During Coronavirus State of Emergency:

- California's price gouging law prevents business from wrongfully profiteering on essential goods, supplies and services during an emergency. If you are the victim of price gouging due to the coronavirus, or if you have information regarding



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potential price gouging, you can file a complaint through the Sonoma County's District Attorney's office or by calling (707) 565-5317. Read the District Attorney's 3/5/20 statement on price gouging:

<http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/DA/Press-Releases/Ravitch-Warns-Against-Price-Gouging-Coronavirus/>.

### **What is the County Doing to Prepare and Respond?**

- Sonoma County has declared a Local Emergency and a Local Public Health Emergency and have mobilized staff throughout the County to assist in keeping our community safe and prevent the spread of coronavirus. County Health officials are coordinating with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to monitor local Coronavirus cases and are working closely with local schools, health care providers, and other partners to share guidance and tools to keep people safe.
  - Health Alert was provided by the Health Officer to health care providers in Sonoma County on March 10, including guidance allowing healthcare providers to send coronavirus tests to commercial labs and non-public health labs. This guidance expands capacity to test cases, quicker. DHS approval is no longer needed prior to testing all cases, only priority cases.
- Sonoma County Airport (STS) Update:
  - STS currently has not restricted any incoming or outgoing flights.
  - Janitorial staff are taking extra precautions with disinfecting the terminal, adding additional hours of cleaning time.
  - The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) would make recommendations for additional screening if needed (they have in San Diego, San Francisco, and LA)
  - The FAA would tell the County Public Health when to change operations if needed.
- Sonoma County Transit Update:
  - SCT cleans and sanitizes its buses each day.
  - Personal protective equipment (e.g., face masks) are available to all drivers.
  - Passengers are encouraged to use CDC personal hygiene guidelines, including through on-board signage.
  - All paratransit buses have hand sanitizer dispensers on board.
  - Employees are encouraged to take time off if they have symptoms of any illness.
- The Human Services Department is supporting efforts to educate and inform the public about the coronavirus.



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- Each director has received a printable version of the Department of Health prevention flier, which their staff members can print and place in public lobbies, take to meetings with partners or email, etc.
- Adult and Aging staff will outreach to its community partner agencies who work with the high-risk age groups, clients, etc.
- HSD will also email partners the Health fliers through its Constant Contact list.
- The divisions will also do the same outreach for the approved FAQs that are relevant to HSD client populations.
- HSD is also sharing County posts on its social media channels.