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## *Promoting an Optimal State of Wellness in Lake County*

### **PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Working Together to Slow the Spread of COVID-19**

Gary Pace MD, MPH

**Lake County, CA (May 28, 2020)** – The recent uptick in identified COVID-19 cases understandably has many Lake County residents concerned. As with many threats we face, the antidote to fear is preparation. As Public Health Officer I am asking every County resident to join me in working to limit our collective risk of COVID-19 exposure, by taking precautions.

One week ago, May 21, a Public Health Order (C20-06) took effect mandating face coverings when entering Lake County businesses. Masking has been demonstrated to minimize the risk of people that are not showing symptoms spreading COVID-19 to others, and this is a key element of our strategy to reopen local businesses as quickly as we responsibly can, and keep them open.

If you are able to wear a face covering, please wear one - it can help keep others safe.

Some people truly cannot wear a mask, due to breathing difficulty or other negative physical or emotional consequences. In last week's Order, I encouraged people with such concerns to get a doctor's note, in case they may otherwise receive push-back when trying to access local businesses. Today's Addendum clarifies that individuals are not required to provide written documentation of their medical exemption.

If you are unable to wear a mask, you can and must help keep others safe in different ways, including by maintaining a minimum physical distance of 6 feet between yourself and anyone that is not a member of your immediate household at all times, unless protective shielding is in place.

Also please remember business owners have a legal obligation to keep their employees and customers safe, and may lawfully refuse, if providing in-person service would threaten the well-being of others. Navigating these dynamics can be challenging at times, and I would encourage residents and business owners, alike, to exercise grace with one another and resolve to be as safe as we possibly can.

Remember, the overall goal is limiting preventable spread of COVID-19, so we can keep the rate of infections manageable, and minimize the chance of severe complications and deaths. That threat may seem abstract, since we haven't had severe peaks in cases that have flooded our hospitals here; I certainly hope we never do.

Taking precautions is essential, particularly if we are to continue reopening new categories of businesses:

- Stay at home, except to engage in permitted activities
- If you are able, wear a face covering when away from home, to protect others
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others

- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds each time
- Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available
- People 65 or older, or otherwise at increased risk, are encouraged to stay safe at home

**More information**

For Lake County-specific Coronavirus information, please continue to visit the Lake County Health Services Department's website, <http://health.co.lake.ca.us>.

The Lake County Coronavirus Response Hub has additional valuable resources:  
<https://lake-co-ca-coronavirus-response-lakecoca.hub.arcgis.com/>

If you still have questions, or you need further assistance registering for testing, please send an email request to [MHOAC@lakecountyca.gov](mailto:MHOAC@lakecountyca.gov) or call during business hours: 707-263-8174.

We will all be safer if we are each vigilant in managing our own risk of unknowingly spreading the virus to others.

For most of us, even though they can be uncomfortable, that will include wearing a face covering.

Gary Pace, MD, MPH