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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **COVID-19 Update: Lake County Entering the Purple Tier**

*Enhanced Restrictions Effective Sunday, 11/29*

**Lake County, CA** – Due to a sharp increase in COVID-19 cases, the State announced today Lake County will join most California counties in the “Purple Tier” of the California Blueprint for a Safer Economy:

<https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/>

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/COVID19CountyMonitoringOverview.aspx>

[https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/Blueprint Data Chart 112820.xlsx](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/Blueprint%20Data%20Chart%20112820.xlsx)

Starting Sunday, November 29, there will be additional restrictions on businesses and social movement in our county, in an effort to slow the spread of this virus.

The number of cases is rising rapidly in various sectors of the community. In a recent press release, we highlighted an outbreak in the County Jail facility. A large cluster has emerged in the Native American community, a variety of businesses are experiencing new cases, and we see continued spread in households and social settings. Many people had smaller gatherings in observance of Thanksgiving, and we expect a significant post-holiday elevation in numbers.

Here is a breakdown of recent trends in Lake County, from our Epidemiologist, Sarah Marikos:

- Our **testing positivity** rate has tripled over the last 3 weeks, from 1.9% to 6.3%
- Over the same time period, our **daily case rate** increased about 2.5 times, from 5 to 13 per 100,000.
- Since mid-October, there has been a steady increase in the **weekly number of cases**, from a low of 21 per week to 57 in mid-November. For the week of November 22-28, we already have 39 known cases.
- **How are people becoming infected?** From November 1-20, nearly 2 in 5 cases (39%) are believed to have resulted from community contact, and about 1 in 3 via household contact. Limiting community transmission is key to decreasing the overall number of cases, and it will reduce the number of people who become infected through household contact.
- **Where do people live who are becoming infected?** Throughout Lake County. In November, about 80% of the known cases lived in the following places: Kelseyville (26% of cases), Clearlake (21%), Lakeport (20%), Clearlake Oaks (8%) and Hidden Valley Lake (5%).
- In November, we've seen cases increase among white, non-Hispanic individuals and Native Americans, and a decrease in Latino cases.

- 11 people were hospitalized due to COVID-19-related issues on Friday. This is about 2x the number we have been seeing in the last month. 8 have been transferred out to other counties.

Our hospitals are maintaining now, and plans are in place if there are significant surges. Please don't go to the Emergency Department simply to obtain COVID testing. If you are sick, and need attention for COVID-related issues, going to the ED makes sense. If you have been a close contact or have mild symptoms, and are worried and want to get tested, contact your medical provider or visit the following sites:

<https://www.projectbaseline.com/study/covid-19/>

<https://www.pixel.labcorp.com/at-home-test-kits/covid-19-test-home-collection-kit>

<http://health.co.lake.ca.us/Coronavirus/Testing.htm>

**What does it mean to move to the Purple Tier?** The California Department of Public Health has specific orders to follow:

- On 11/19 the State Public Health Officer issued a “Limited Stay at Home Order,” “requiring that all gatherings with members of other households and all activities conducted outside the residence, lodging, or temporary accommodation with members of other households cease between 10:00pm PST and 5:00am PST, except for those activities associated with the operation, maintenance, or usage of critical infrastructure or required by law. This order does not apply to persons experiencing homelessness. Nothing in this order prevents any number of persons from the same household from leaving their residence, lodging, or temporary accommodation, as long as they do not engage in any interaction with (or otherwise gather with) any number of persons from any other household, except as specifically permitted herein.” (<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/limited-stay-at-home-order.aspx>)
- Hair salons, personal care services, and barbershops can remain open with modifications.
- Retail, open indoors with modifications and max 25% capacity
- Only outdoor private gatherings permitted, with modifications, 3 households max, 2 hour duration
- Museums, outdoor only
- Places of worship, outdoor only, with modifications
- Gyms and fitness centers, outdoor only with modifications
- Restaurants, outdoor only with modifications (no more indoor dining)
- Schools that were already open can remain open; schools that have not yet opened need to remain closed until we return to the Red Tier. Elementary schools can apply for a waiver that may allow reopening.

While the State announced the tier change just today, Saturday November 28, due to the rapid rise in cases, they now require any sector changes need to begin the day following the announcement.

While these rises have been anticipated, they bring great sadness and suffering to families dealing with sick relatives. Community members and businesses are understandably frustrated at having to deal with more limitations.

Please take this virus seriously. It is spreading freely throughout the community now.

Healthcare providers and the Health Department continue to do what we can to identify and support people who are infected and ill. All Lake County residents must take precautions to protect our families and neighbors.

Stay home, wear masks, and be super careful. The next few months will be tough, but we will make it through this period a lot better off if we consider each other's needs and vulnerabilities when we are thinking about going out and doing things with other people.

Gary Pace, MD, MPH