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Promoting an Optimal State of Wellness in Lake County

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First COVID-19-Related Death in Lake County

Gary Pace MD, MPH

Lake County, CA (July 3, 2020) – The COVID-19 pandemic has brought sudden and life-changing loss to many thousands of Californians. Each of the more than 6,000 deaths unsettled the worlds of friends, family members and neighbors.

It is my solemn responsibility to report the first COVID-19-related death in Lake County. The exact circumstances are still being investigated, but this person became ill at home, was transported by ambulance, and died in the Emergency Department; they later tested positive for COVID-19. Our sincere condolences go out to family and friends in this deeply sad situation.

COVID-19 infections continue to rise in Lake County. As of this morning, we have confirmed a total of 86 cases, with 39 considered active. 4 are currently hospitalized, with 2 in-County. The other 2 have been transferred to a higher level of care out of county, and 1 of those is now considered COVID-free, but remains under hospital care.

Investigation into the outbreak in the farmworker community remains ongoing, and we are grateful both workers and employers have been highly responsible and cooperative in managing this challenging situation. All of those infected are on home isolation, and cooperating with Public Health.

Several other cases have been identified from various sources. Many of them have been traced to known cases; either household members or cases from out of the county.

A handful of the recent cases, though, have no identifiable source. Community transmission is presumed.

This is Not a Normal July 4 – We All Must Take Precautions

Given the increase in cases in California, our region, and Lake County, specifically, we all must take extra precautions this weekend. Because of their considerable proactive efforts to plan for safety, the fireworks display in Clearlake will proceed as a drive-in event.

However, from a Public Health standpoint, I highly recommend people celebrate with immediate household members at home. It is traditional to gather in public places for the 4th, but this is not a normal year. Given we are already experiencing a significant surge in viral activity heading into this holiday, it is not a stretch to imagine our healthcare system may become strained in the coming weeks, and we may see some activities further restricted, if Lake County residents and visitors do not take appropriate care. Reopening efforts have already contracted in 19 counties.

Whatever you do this weekend, please avoid crowds. Wear face coverings and practice social distancing when leaving home for any reason, and stay in, if possible. Gatherings, even with close family and friends, are not advisable. Social groups of any kind should be kept as small as possible, and any gatherings that do proceed should be held outdoors with proper distancing.

If you are feeling ill, stay home and away from others. Particularly if you are vulnerable to severe complications, please understand the virus is already more present in our communities than it has been at any previous stage of the pandemic, and we expect to see increased tourist activity this weekend.

We all must do our part to prevent the kind of spread we have seen in other areas around California and the U.S. Washing your hands, wearing a mask, canceling the large gathering you had hoped to host; these things are not only sensible under the circumstances — they can literally save lives.

Thank you for showing care and regard for others, and respect for all that is at stake, both for public health and our local economy, by staying safe this 4th of July weekend.

Gary Pace, MD, MPH