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*Promoting an Optimal State of Wellness in Lake County*

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

**The Risk of Illness from Novel Coronavirus in**  
**Lake County, Continues to be Low**  
**February 4, 2020**

Gary Pace, MD, MPH-- Lake County Public Health Officer

Concerns about the spread of novel Coronavirus 2019 (nCoV-2019) are increasing as the disease expands its reach. As of 2/3/2020, there are over 17,362 cases globally and over 362 deaths, (all but one was in China). Some patients have had mild illness while others have been more severe, and some have died. This number is increasing rapidly, and the virus is starting to be found outside of China, with 150 cases in twenty-three other countries. Eleven (11) cases have been identified in the United States with six (6) in California. The closest location to our area being Santa Clara County. There is no evidence of person-to-person transmission in the general public in California. The main risk for getting the virus has been identified as recent travel to Hubei Province in China, where Wuhan is located, or person-to-person close exposure or close contact with someone who is infected with the virus.

The dramatic healthcare response to the spread of nCoV-2019 is because no one has immunity since this is a new virus, the lack of an effective vaccine or treatment, and poor understanding about how long it will last or how deadly it can be. Health officials worry that this virus could become very widespread and cause extensive illness and death for which we have few available defenses. The US Department of Homeland Security has taken steps to dramatically decrease entry into the US by people who have travelled to Hubei province. The aim is to slow the spread of the virus, in efforts to allow time for the science to evolve to the point that we can more effectively manage a large outbreak.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has activated an Emergency Operations Center for the nCoV-2019. Dr. Sonia Angell, the Director of the CDPH announced, "We will

continue working with our partners to monitor for any additional cases that may occur in California, to ensure that persons can be safely and effectively evaluated for this novel virus, and to protect the health of the people of California.”

At the Lake County Health Department, we are regularly in touch with state and federal experts, we communicate about updates with local health providers, and we are making preparations for the possibility of any cases showing up in our area. Currently, the immediate health risk from nCoV 2019 to the general public remains low.

It is very important for persons who have recently traveled and who become ill to notify their health care provider of their travel history. Persons who have recently visited Wuhan, China, or who have had contact with a person with possible novel coronavirus infection should contact their local health department or health care provider.

State health officials, with cooperation from the local Health Departments, are continuing with the following actions:

- Providing information about the outbreak and how to report suspected cases to local health departments and health care providers in California.
- Coordinating with CDC personnel who are doing screening of travelers from Wuhan, China at SFO and LAX airports.
- Assuring that health care providers know how to safely manage persons with possible nCoV-2019 infection.
- Supporting hospitals and local public health laboratories for collection and shipment of specimens for testing at CDC for nCoV-2019.
- Activating CDPH’s Emergency Operations Center to coordinate response efforts across the state.

As with any virus, especially during the flu season, CDPH reminds you there are a number of steps you can take to protect your health and those around you

- These are all ways to reduce the risk of infection with a number of different viruses:
  - Washing hands with soap and water.
  - Avoiding touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Avoiding close contact with people who are sick, are all ways to reduce the risk of infection with a number of different viruses.
- If someone does become sick with respiratory symptoms like fever and cough, they should stay away from work, school or other people to avoid spreading illness.

For more information about nCov-2019, please visit the following websites:

CDPH Website;

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx>

CDC Website;

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov>

or contact Lake County Public Health (707) 263-1090.