NEWS RELEASE
COVID-19 Response

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

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March 24, 2020

First death associated with COVID-19 recorded within county

San Bernardino County today reported its first death associated with novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Earlier today, the County reported 31 total cases. Seven additional cases have been confirmed since then, which brings the total case count to 38.

The patient who died was a 50-year-old male with underlying health conditions.

"Our hearts go out to this gentleman's loved ones," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Curt Hagman. "This is a sad milestone in our county's fight against this global pandemic. This loss reminds us how vital it is that we comply with official health orders to keep ourselves, our loved ones, and our communities safe."

California Gov. Gavin Newsom and the State Public Health Officer on March 19 issued a statewide stay-at-home order with exceptions for essential tasks and services. See details here: covid19.ca.gov/stay-home-except-for-essential-needs.

"Public Health extends our deepest sympathy to the individual's loved ones in the aftermath of this tragedy," said Dr. Erin Gustafson, San Bernardino County Acting Health Officer. "In these unsettled times, it is clear that the spread of COVID-19 is broad. Everyone should assume that anyone could have COVID-19 and unintentionally infect others. Therefore, we are appealing to everyone who possibly can to stay safe at home."

The Acting County Health Officer and the Board of Supervisors have declared a local health emergency to help ensure county government and the public are prepared and allow flexibility in response. Various county departments and agencies are working together and in partnership with cities, schools, and the business and nonprofit communities to ensure an effective response.

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

- People experiencing symptoms of contagious illness should seek medical guidance.
- Persons aged 65 years and older and persons of any age with certain underlying health conditions are at increased risk should they contract COVID-19 and are encouraged to self-quarantine.
- Wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth, especially with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using regular household cleaning spray or wipes.
- N95 masks are not recommended outside a healthcare setting. Surgical masks can be worn by sick individuals to reduce the likelihood of spreading germs to others.

For information about the coronavirus crisis, visit the County's coronavirus website at wp.sbcounty.gov/dph/coronavirus. New information and resources have been added and the site is being updated daily. The public can also contact the coronavirus public information line from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday at (909) 387-3911, or email the County at coronavirus@dph.sbcounty.gov.

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