



# NEWS

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March 11, 2020

**For Immediate Release**

## **Update on County Response to COVID-19**

**Redwood City, Calif.** – The County of San Mateo continues to work to protect public health and safety in response to the novel coronavirus known as COVID-19.

The County of San Mateo's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) remains open to coordinate countywide response and communications in response to the situation. The EOC's Joint Information Center will provide daily status reports at approximately 4 p.m. Monday through Friday until further notice. Today's report:

### **County Officials Urge Compassion Toward Cruise Ship Passengers**

The County's EOC was notified by the state of its intention to temporarily house passengers from the Grand Princess cruise ship at a private hotel in the city of San Carlos. The County has no responsibility for operations at the hotel, but the EOC will support the city of San Carlos' EOC as needed.

The County is urging compassion as the federal and state governments work to provide a safe, medically appropriate setting for the passengers. The complete news release is available at <http://cmo.smcgov.org/eoc>.

### **Health Officer Issues Order Barring Visitors & Non-Essential Personnel from Skilled Nursing Facilities**

County Health Officer Dr. Scott Morrow has issued a legal order barring unauthorized visitors and non-essential personnel from licensed skilled nursing facilities in the county. COVID-19 places residents at long-term care facilities at high risk since visitors may have the virus but may not have symptoms or may have mild symptoms. They can easily pass the virus on to vulnerable residents.

The order restricts unauthorized visitors and non-essential personnel from those facilities until May 9, unless rescinded by the health officer. The complete news release and order are available at <http://cmo.smcgov.org/eoc>.

## **Health Officer Shifts Focus to Social Distancing, Elderly & Medically Vulnerable**

The skilled nursing facilities order adds new urgency to Dr. Morrow's guidance for everyone to practice social distancing, as the disease spreads in our community. He adds special emphasis to persons over 60 and those with underlying medical conditions, who should avoid all gatherings to the extent possible. Dr. Morrow's complete statement is available at [smchealth.org/coronavirus](http://smchealth.org/coronavirus).

## **San Mateo County COVID-19 Cases Reach 15**

San Mateo County Health has updated the number of positive cases to 15.

San Mateo County Health is working closely with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to respond to novel coronavirus and its potential impacts on the Bay Area. The CDC believes that the public's risk of exposure is relatively low.

Updates can be found at <https://www.smchealth.org/coronavirus>

## **Call Center Update**

Residents with non-medical, non-emergency questions about the coronavirus can call 211 or text "coronavirus" to 211211 at any time, day or night. The 211 service received 193 calls from Friday evening through 5 p.m. Tuesday.

Callers from landlines and cellular telephones located within San Mateo County are connected with a trained 211 service professional. 211 is a confidential service available in 180 languages.

## **Additional Actions**

In addition to activating the EOC, the County has taken the following actions:

- Created a dedicated website with EOC updates at [cmo.smcgov.org/eoc](http://cmo.smcgov.org/eoc)
- Established a 24/7 call center – 211 – where residents can call (or text "coronavirus" to 211211 with non-medical questions about the coronavirus
- Board of Supervisors proclaimed a local state of emergency and the health officer declared a local health emergency
- Issued a price gouging alert, reminding the public it is illegal after proclaiming or declaring an emergency. Reports can be made at the District Attorney's Office at 650-363-4403 or [da.smcgov.org/price-gouging-covid-19](http://da.smcgov.org/price-gouging-covid-19)