



# NEWS

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**For Immediate Release**

## **San Mateo County Health Officer Reinforces Social Distancing Message**

*“We need to make every possible effort to avoid contact with each other”*

**Redwood City** — Responding to reports about crowds in beaches and parks over the weekend—despite the Bay Area and statewide orders—San Mateo County Health Officer Dr. Scott Morrow says, “We are in a grave crisis. I believe the virus is growing at an exponential rate in our county. Unless everyone does their part and follows the County’s Shelter-in-Place order and the Governor’s Safer at Home order, we will be facing an Italy-type catastrophe very soon. These orders are not recommendations, they are rules to be followed.”

Italy currently has over 63,000 cases with over 6,000 fatalities due to COVID-19 and a health care system near collapse. The Bay Area has 848 cases.

The only way to stop of the spread of the disease is to adhere to the letter and the spirit of the shelter in place orders. “We need to make every possible effort to avoid contact with each other,” Dr. Morrow says.

He continues, “For families in different households, do not mix your households at this time. As hard as this is, do not gather in any way outside of immediate households. As for outdoor exercise, people certainly need to get out, but do this in your own immediate neighborhoods. Do not drive except to provide or obtain an essential service. Do not go into other neighborhoods for recreation. This increases the risk of virus spread. Always maintain social distance. Wash your hands frequently and follow all the other recommended actions.”

Dr. Morrow’s full message is here: <https://www.smchealth.org/post/health-officer-statements>

Governor Gavin Newsom, San Francisco Mayor London Breed, and other local health officers have made similar pleas for the public to take these measures seriously and to understand that ignoring social distancing directives can endanger public safety.

Dr. Morrow is appealing to community generosity as we confront this crisis: “Now more than ever, what I need for you to do is fully follow my recommendations’ advice and orders, unite as a community, come to each other’s aid, and let kindness, compassion, and gratitude guide your actions.”

For more information, visit [smchealth.org/coronavirus](https://smchealth.org/coronavirus).

For news from the County of San Mateo, including to subscribe to updates, go to [smcgov.org](https://smcgov.org).

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