From: County of Merced <mcinfo@countyofmerced.ccsend.com> on behalf of County of Merced <notifications@worknetmerced.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 05, 2020 4:32 PM
To: chrisy@mmcms.org
Subject: COVID-19 Notification: Press Release - Health Officials Confirm First Death Related to COVID-19 in Merced County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
April 5, 2020

Health Officials Confirm First Death Related to COVID-19 in Merced County

MERCED COUNTY, CA – Today, the Merced County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) confirmed the first death of a Merced County resident with COVID-19 (novel coronavirus). The resident was a male under the age of 65 with underlying health conditions. Due to confidentiality laws, additional identifying information cannot be released.

"The age of this individual highlights the fact that everyone is vulnerable to this disease," said Public Health Director Dr. Rebecca Nanyonjo-Kemp.

"This tragic death from COVID-19 of one of our own saddens us all, and serves as a reminder that our community is not going to be spared the terrible effects of this illness," said Merced County Public Health Officer, Dr. Kenneth Bird. "All of us must

do everything we can to halt its spread locally. Stay at home, wash your hands, cover your coughs and sneezes, and wear a cloth mask if you need to leave home for an essential purpose."

MCDPH strongly urges all of our residents to comply with the Stay-at-Home Order issued by Dr. Bird. Residents should only leave their homes to perform or receive essential services and should not participate in any non-essential gatherings. Even leaving the house for essential services should be limited whenever possible.

To ensure the safety of the community, health officials are drafting additional health orders for various stages of COVID-19 progression in the community; additional orders will be in place within the next few days.

EVERYONE SHOULD:
- Stay home, especially if you're sick
- Have no visitors, even family members
- Only leave home for essential services
- Practice social distancing, which means keeping at least 6 feet between you and any person, especially when outside of your home
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds
- Not touch your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
- Call your health care provider first if you think you have COVID-19

For general information pertaining to COVID-19, check MCDPH's webpage at www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus. For any additional questions, contact the Merced County Department of Public Health's information line at 209-381-1180 (English, Spanish, Hmong).

To schedule a phone interview, please contact the Public Health Communication Office from Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. at 209-381-1187.

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