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Promoting an Optimal State of Wellness in Lake County

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COVID-19 Update: Enhanced Business Restrictions May Come Next Week

Lake County, CA (September 25, 2020) — Over the past few weeks, we have seen a rise in cases in Lake County. Outbreaks have occurred at two of the area Senior Residential Facilities. At one, 39 residents tested positive (tragically, 7 have died) and 16 staff were infected. At the other, 3 residents and 8 staff have tested positive. One COVID-19 unit is serving positive patients from both facilities. State and local Public Health officials are providing support.

Clusters of infection have also occurred in businesses, schools, and among first responders. Public Health staff are consulting with businesses and organizations with positive cases on how to limit spread, but outcomes are better when people are careful before the virus is in their immediate circle; wearing masks, regularly washing hands and avoiding gatherings.

The “Purple Tier” has replaced the “Watch List” in the State's Blueprint for a Safer Economy. A new case rate greater than 4.7 cases per day places us in this most restrictive Tier, and recent clusters have pushed us over that mark. As early as Friday, October 2, indoor services at restaurants, places of worship and gyms and fitness centers may again be prohibited in Lake County. The aim is to limit risk; community spread happens more indoors. Select a Purple Tier county (e.g. Butte) at <https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/> for all restrictions.

We are advocating with the State to delay further restrictions. For the week of 9/6-9/12, removing Senior Facility numbers would allow us to stay in the Red Tier, so we are arguing an exception should be made. It is unclear whether our appeal will be granted.

The week of 9/13-9/19 brought more community spread, exceeding the State threshold, regardless of the Senior Facility numbers. However, if we are vigilant, once we move past the outbreaks and post-Labor Day holiday increase, our numbers may decrease.

If we are placed in the Purple Tier on Tuesday, businesses will have 3 days to shift their processes and stop indoor services. Enhanced restrictions will remain for a minimum of 3 weeks, and the State will get more directly involved in local planning. Until recently, our case and test positivity rates were lower than most of California; we enjoyed more freedoms than most. We can and must get there again.

This has been a long haul for all of us, but I am again asking your help to keep businesses open, and protect the health of our community. Please continue to take precautions, and keep your family and neighbors safe.

Gary Pace, MD, MPH