



PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY TO IMMEDIATELY MITIGATE COVID-19 RISKS IN YUBA COUNTY AND SUTTER COUNTY

December 4, 2020

To all Yuba-Sutter Residents:

The current COVID-19 situation is dire in Yuba-Sutter. We have the highest rate of COVID-19 test positivity in the State. The State's average is 6.4% - Yuba is 16.2% and Sutter is 20.1% - (Sutter being the highest of all 58 counties). This means that for every person who gets tested for COVID-19, nearly one in five tests positive for COVID-19. Our situation is much worse when compared with several neighboring counties such as Butte (4.6% test positivity), Colusa (13.7% test positivity), and Sacramento (9.4% test positivity).

The Yuba-Sutter region has only one hospital, Adventist-Rideout, and it is heavily impacted by the recent surge in cases, leading to a near tripling of hospitalizations in the past few weeks. Their Intensive Care Unit ("ICU") is full because of the surge in COVID-19 patients needing ICU level care. There are not enough ICU nurses to expand for more ICU beds. Hospital nurses are highly specialized. An Emergency Department ("ED") or ICU nurse cannot be trained overnight, or even in a matter of months. This current surge in hospitalizations is a statewide and nationwide issue and resources are minimal for hospitals asking for assistance.

We all need to help each other and I desperately call for your assistance. The ways to mitigate the risk of more residents becoming infected and to prevent overwhelming our local hospital is for everyone to immediately limit your in-person interactions with people outside of your household over the next 3 weeks. I understand this is a heavy lift but we are asking this for not only our friends and relatives, but our nurses and doctors, and other hospital staff - some of whom are already near their breaking point.

Starting on Monday, December 7, 2020 and for the next 3 weeks, I am strongly advising Yuba County and Sutter County residents to immediately:

1. *Limit activities outside of your household and outside of your home. Strive to limit outings outside of your home to ONCE per week for vital activities (groceries, medicines, care of elderly or dependent relatives) and do not allow others outside of your household into your home.*

Given how pervasive COVID-19 community transmission is occurring and that the majority of COVID-19 transmission is due to asymptomatic transmission, it is vitally necessary for all residents to limit their movements outside of their homes and to not allow those outside their household into their homes.

2. *Revert schools to distance learning for ALL grades*

Even with the reversion to distance learning for grades 7th-12th two weeks prior, we continue to see cases identified in the schools that remain open for in-person schooling. It is usually in teachers or staff, however, the disruption to in-person learning extends to the students since the students of that positive teacher must immediately quarantine for 14-days. We are noticing discrepancies even within schools, where one class may remain open whereas another class has to close due to a positive case. This has resulted in added stress to students, staff, and the parents of students due to their inability to rely upon a consistent schedule.

Until we can drastically reduce the rates of community transmission, this cycle of intermittent classroom quarantine will continue.

3. *No in-person dining - regardless of outdoor or indoor*

When eating and drinking, we cannot have on our facemask. We know masks work to protect **yourself and persons within close proximity**. Residents have not been dining **only** with their own household members – propagating chains of transmission through what is essentially mini-gatherings. Currently, these risks are too great in the midst of pervasive COVID-19 transmission.

4. *Suspend all in-person county, city, and other governmental functions as determined by the respective governing board*

These actions are being advised to ensure the health and safety of employees and the public they serve by minimizing to the maximum extent feasible all in person services. Too many departments and their employees interact on a daily basis. The common goal among this and

other advisories is to mitigate risk of our residents being exposed to COVID-19 and preventing further spread, sickness, and death.

Again, I implore each of you to follow this health advisory. Let's do this for our friends, families, neighbors, and for our healthcare workers. We are all in this together – please commit to making a difference.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phuong Luu', with a stylized, flowing script.

Phuong Luu, MD, MHS, FACP

Bi-County Health Officer

Yuba County and Sutter County