



March 20, 2020

Contra Costa Health Services

Statement Regarding Contra Costa County's First Death Caused by Novel Coronavirus

Today Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) confirms the first death in our county caused by novel coronavirus, also known as COVID-19.

The person was a county resident in their 70s who had a condition that placed them at risk of serious illness and had recently traveled outside the country. They passed away at a hospital in Contra Costa on Thursday, March 19. Our thoughts are with the family of this patient, and with all who have lost loved ones during the pandemic.

This death underscores the urgent need for all Contra Costa residents to follow the county's stay-at-home order, and the state order issued by Governor Newsom last night. Novel coronavirus is dangerous for older adults and people with certain medical conditions, including heart or lung disease, diabetes, and those with weak immune symptoms.

We recognize that government orders to stay home disrupt everyone's lives. We would not ask you to stay home if it was not very important. We believe that by following these orders, we can make our community safer for those who are most vulnerable. We believe that we can reduce the spread of this virus right now in our community – and that we can save lives.

The situation is serious in Contra Costa. As of today, Contra Costa Public Health has confirmed 46 cases in our community, and we expect more confirmed cases as testing increases. We believe aggressive testing can help, and we are ramping up our testing efforts.

We want the public to understand that more confirmed cases does not mean we are losing ground. It means we are sharpening our focus and gathering data that will help us through this emergency.

Contra Costa is doing all it can to slow the spread of the coronavirus and reduce its impact. The county's Emergency Operations Center has activated and slowing the spread of the virus is now the primary focus of all local government in Contra Costa.

Because COVID-19 is new, humans have no immunity to it and there is no vaccine. So the best way to protect yourself is to practice good personal hygiene – handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes, not touching your face. If you are ill, it is imperative that you stay home.

Although we don't know when the pandemic will end, we can keep you updated – visit cchealth.org/coronavirus or call 1-844-729-8410 if you have questions.

