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## *Promoting an Optimal State of Wellness in Lake County*

### **PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **13 Business Sectors to Reopen or Expand this Friday, June 12**

Gary Pace MD, MPH

**Lake County, CA (June 9, 2020)** – On Friday afternoon, June 5, the State issued guidance for reopening or expansion of 13 business sectors, with a recommended effective date of no sooner than June 12. Today, during the Board of Supervisors’ regular meeting, I announced we will be reopening all of these sectors this Friday, on the first day of eligibility.

The reopening or expanding sectors are:

- Childcare services (updated, expanded)
- Schools (interim guidance)
- Day camps
- Casinos operated by Sovereign Tribal Nations
- Music, Film and Television Production
- Professional Sports without Live Audiences
- Campgrounds, RV Parks, and Outdoor Recreation
- Hotels and Vacation Rentals (e.g. VRBO, Airbnb)
- Cardrooms, Satellite Wagering Facilities and Racetracks
- Family Entertainment Centers
- Restaurants, Bars and Wineries
- Fitness Facilities
- Museums, Galleries, Zoos and Aquariums

The California Department of Public Health’s Press Release, with links to each set of guidelines, can be found here: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPA/Pages/NR20-113.aspx>

As Public Health Officer, my job is to consider the health and well-being of all Lake County residents, and “public health” is certainly multi-faceted. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have sought to take a measured approach that well reflects our actual risks and capacity to respond. So far, our reopening has been step-wise, incremental, and infections have remained limited. Opening or expanding 13 sectors at once represents a considerable, non-incremental, step forward, and will increase the probability of spread, including community transmission, of COVID-19 in Lake County.

Yet, it is the right decision at this time. Today is the 83<sup>rd</sup> day Lake County residents have been subject to Shelter-in-Place and statewide Stay at Home Orders. Effects of the actions of the past three months on our communities and businesses have been widespread and severe, and most of those consequences have been economic, as

opposed to directly health-related. We have had 30 total cases, and spread has not, to date, occurred at such a rate that it has stressed our local healthcare system.

Viral activity has remained stable in our communities, even as we have reopened Clear Lake and some industries that support tourism, such as restaurants. We have seen clusters of infections, which is expected with any highly contagious virus, but no true community transmission; no occurrences of cases we just can't explain. While we have fewer hospital and ICU beds and fewer ventilators than many communities, we have only seen a total of 3 COVID-related hospitalizations in nearly 3 months' time.

In recent weeks, I have continually undertaken substantial review of the status of COVID-19 in our communities. In the past several days, this has included consideration of recent events that could prompt an increase in viral activity and robust discussion with community stakeholders, including the Lake County COVID-19 Recovery Workgroup, a collective that includes two members of the Board of Supervisors and executive leadership from the County and Cities of Clearlake and Lakeport. There is round agreement now is the time for a big step forward.

We sit just under a month away from the July 4 holiday, typically a time that Lake County sees a major influx of visitors using our spectacular lake. Businesses in all sectors continue to adjust to social distancing and other precautions, and offering a reasonable period of time for businesses in the newly-eligible industries to open and adapt prior to that holiday weekend makes sense.

I am also cognizant there are industries that remain closed, statewide, and the owners and employees of those businesses continue to endure great hardship. These include nail salons, massage therapists, estheticians and tattoo parlors. Provided COVID-19 activity remains stable, we hope to facilitate those businesses safely reopening as soon as possible, as well. While no timeline has been provided by the State, things seem to be accelerating.

Our goal has always been to reopen for good, and not take outsized risks that ultimately stunt our progress, and lead to increasing restrictions. For this to happen, the key is people engaging in activities safely.

Precautions only become more important as more activities are permitted. Handwashing will help keep businesses open. Social distancing and face coverings will allow us to move about more freely. For preventive measures to be effective, people must practice them, and encourage others to do so.

Additionally, all reopening businesses in Lake County must take precautions, and complete and post Social Distancing Protocol and Business Certification Forms. COVID-19 Reopening Plans must also be made available to customers or public officials, on request. These practices will help keep our economy moving forward.

Now is not the time to be cavalier, and take undue risks. Now is the time to adapt to what is our new normal, for the time being, take appropriate precautions, and resume as many activities as we responsibly can.

Forms and resources for Lake County businesses are available here:

<http://health.co.lake.ca.us/Coronavirus/Businesses.htm>

Sector-specific reopening guidance can be found here:

<https://covid19.ca.gov/industry-guidance/>

If you review this information and still have questions, reach out to County of Lake Health Services staff, at [MHOAC@lakecountycalifornia.gov](mailto:MHOAC@lakecountycalifornia.gov), or 707-263-8174.

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