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Promoting an Optimal State of Wellness in Lake County

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COVID-19 Update: Directing Resources Where Need is Greatest; 14th, 15th Deaths Reported

Lake County, CA (October 16, 2020) — COVID-19 is a highly infectious virus that can be life-threatening; its potential consequences, particularly for the vulnerable, have driven unprecedented preventive strategies. Locally, preventing and controlling outbreaks in congregate living facilities and slowing spread in the wider community through masking and social distancing are key elements.

Directing additional resources to disadvantaged communities and essential front-line workers is critical, as well. Despite our efforts, significant disparities have emerged. Those that live in crowded conditions, work in settings requiring close contact with people outside of their household, and those with little available paid sick time have been infected at higher rates.

Moving to less restrictive tiers of the State's framework, and further invigorating our local economy, will require targeted interventions. Those at disproportionate risk need resources: additional testing, services, and education to help people stay off work and out of the public when they are infected.

Infection rates are 2-3x higher among Latino Lake County residents, and 2x greater in Native American communities, as compared to our general population data. 49.9% of Lake County's cases have affected Latino or Hispanic individuals, and 6.2% of those infected have been Native American.

Regrettably, these groups are facing more problems with access to services and greater pressures to work, even when exposed to the virus. The County of Lake's Health Services Department is committed to acting on these disparities, and we submitted a plan to the State this week. The State has also encouraged local jurisdictions to regularly publish data regarding caseloads in groups with the highest rates of COVID-19 infection; we will do that, starting next week.

Directing resources where the need is greatest just makes sense, and we are grateful Federal and State funding is available to support enhanced efforts.

14th and 15th COVID-Related Deaths Reported in Lake County

In Tuesday's video update, I shared the deeply unfortunate news of Lake County's 14th COVID-related death. That individual was greater than 65 years old, had a previous history of medical issues, and was hospitalized at the time of death. Today, we received word a 15th individual had passed away, following a lengthy COVID-related hospitalization. This person was over 60 years old. No further information will be shared at this time.

Each death has been a reminder that, in a time of pandemic, individual decisions can have tragic consequences; we all play a part in keeping our friends and neighbors and the medically vulnerable safe. Thank you for working alongside us to promote the best of outcomes for Lake County's richly diverse communities.

Gary Pace, MD, MPH