



Public Health Division

# County of Santa Cruz

## HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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### Press Release

<b>For Release:</b> Immediately	<b>Contact:</b> Jason Hoppin, Communications Manager
<b>Date:</b> March 16, 2020	<b>Phone:</b> (831) 454-3401

### Health Officer Issues Order to Protect Public Health and Safety

In union with other Bay Area counties and to conform with new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Gov. Gavin Newsom, Santa Cruz County Health Officer Dr. Gail Newel has issued an order to preserve health care capacity and protect the community from the impacts of novel coronavirus, or COVID-19.

Effective 12:01 a.m. on Tuesday, March 17, 2020, and continuing until 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, April 7, 2020, residents are hereby ordered to shelter in place and limit public activities to essential services, which are listed below. The order is intended to help restrict the spread of COVID-19 in the community.

“These common-sense, temporary measures are based the best medical practices and are intended to help slow the spread of communicable diseases,” Dr. Newel said. “They are not intended to alarm, and I encourage everyone to keep their spirits up while adjusting their routines to help protect the health and welfare of all Santa Cruz County residents.”

COVID-19 is a new virus impacting several nations including the U.S. There are 1,629 confirmed cases in the U.S., including 392 in California and nine in Santa Cruz County. While the symptoms of cough, fever and respiratory difficulties are minor in most patients including children, the disease can be fatal in certain vulnerable populations.

“These extraordinary measures are necessary to meet the challenge in front of us,” County Administrative Office Carlos Palacios said. “We will come together as a community. I urge everyone to follow these measures closely.”

The Health Officer’s order defines essential services and activities to include exceptions necessary to limit negative public health impact. They include law and safety operations, essential government services, health care operations, pharmacies, child care facilities, food production including farming, food businesses including groceries and other food retailers, telecommunications, restaurants operating at reduced capacity, shelter including hotels, social services, establishments and agencies serving



economically disadvantaged populations, gas stations, banks, laundry businesses and safety and sanitation businesses. A full list is included in the order.

Furthermore, the County and its partner agencies are quickly mobilizing to develop contingency plans to help protect low-income and other vulnerable populations and help assure essential needs are met.

On Sunday, the Centers for Disease Control issued guidance recommending cancellation of gatherings of more than 50 persons through May 10, 2020. Concurrently, California Gov. Gavin Newsom issued a directive recommending isolation for elderly adults aged 65 and older, the closure of non-essential commercial establishments and reduced capacity at restaurants.

While county residents must comply with this order, they are also encouraged to support each other by checking on vulnerable neighbors and making sure their needs are met, supporting families whose children are out of school and supporting local businesses where possible including ordering takeout food.

For more information on COVID-19, visit [www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus](http://www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus), call 211 or text “COVID19” to 211211.