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**Merced County on Monitoring List with State-Mandated Closures for Businesses**

MERCED COUNTY, CA – The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has flagged 19 counties, including Merced County (County) based on increased transmission of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). As of July 1, the County is now on the third day of not having met state requirements listed in the attestation criteria allowing the County to progress from Stage 2 to 2B. The table below includes the metrics the state has identified as not having been met.

		Elevated Disease Transmission		Increasing Hospitalization	Limited Hospital Capacity	
<b>Threshold</b>	<b>&lt;150</b>	<b>Case Rate &gt;100</b>		<b>&gt;10% Increase</b>	<b>&lt;20% ICU Beds Available</b>	
		<b>OR</b>			<b>OR</b>	
		<b>Case Rate &gt;25 AND Positivity &gt;8%</b>			<b>&lt;25% Ventilators Available</b>	
<b>County</b>	<b>Avg # tests per day (per 100,000 population) (7 day average with a 7 day lag)</b>	<b>Case rate per 100,000 (14 days)</b>	<b>Testing positivity (%) (7 day average with a 7 day lag)</b>	<b>% Change in 3-day avg COVID+ hospitalized patients</b>	<b>% ICU beds currently available</b>	<b>% Ventilators currently available</b>
<b>Merced</b>	<b>112.5</b>	<b>137.8</b>	<b>11.8%</b>	<b>16.3%*</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>✓</b>

*\*Note: CDPH doesn't disclose this data when less than 20 COVID patients are housed within County hospitals. In the spirit of transparency, the Merced County Department of Public Health feels it is important for the community to have this information. See CDPH monitoring website for more information: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/CountyMonitoringDataStep2.aspx>*

“The State has made it very clear that should the cases continue to increase without change over the next 21-day period, they may have to intervene or require that the County return to sheltering in place. We have worked so hard for the past several months in keeping numbers low. This is clearly not the case and while the Department does its part, it will be depending on residents in the community to do theirs,” said Dr. Rebecca Nanyonjo-Kemp, Merced County’s Public Health Director.

Due to the increased levels of transmission and hospitalizations, local health officials are working closely with CDPH and State officials to establish and implement steps to mitigate spread. At the direction of the Governor, Merced County Health Officials are mandating the closure of higher risk

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business sectors **by Friday, July 3, 2020**. All bars, brew pubs and breweries must cease operations (indoor and outdoor). In addition, the following business sectors must close all indoor operations:

- Restaurants (socially-distanced outdoor dining still permissible)
- Wineries and Tasting Rooms
- Family Entertainment Centers (e.g., bowling, movie theaters, etc.)
- Zoos and Museums
- Cardrooms

The above sectors will remain impacted for a minimum of 21 days, or until the County data monitored by CDPH improves. The ability of Merced County to reopen these sectors and prevent closure of other sectors is dependent on collective community action to reduce spread.

Further, to prevent further holiday-related spikes in COVID-19 cases, Merced County's regional parks will be closed to the public over the Fourth of July holiday weekend (Friday-Sunday). This includes Lake Yosemite, Hagaman Park, and Henderson Park. These parks will reopen Monday, but physical distancing must be adhered to and group gatherings of greater than 10 people will continue to be prohibited.

We cannot emphasize enough that if the community fails to take the threat of COVID-19 seriously, the State will not allow these sectors to reopen, and may close additional sectors. As a reminder, it is a statewide mandate to wear a cloth face covering inside of, or in line to enter any indoor public space, or when unable to maintain six feet of social distance outside. Merced County Health Officials strongly recommends all residents (including business sectors) to practice the following safety measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- ✓ Wear a cloth face covering or face shield;
- ✓ Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as door handles and elevator buttons;
- ✓ Practice social distancing;
- ✓ Wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds;
- ✓ When handwashing is not possible, use hand sanitizer with 60% alcohol base; and
- ✓ If you experience any COVID-19 symptoms (available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>) **stay home** and self-monitor.

For more information on COVID-19, please visit the Department's resource website at [www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus](http://www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus).

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