



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

March 9, 2020

Marin Confirms First In-County Case of COVID-19

Residents can slow disease spread with simple, everyday behaviors

San Rafael, CA – The [Marin County Department of Health and Human Services](#) (HHS) is working with medical staff at a local hospital to treat a Marin resident diagnosed with [COVID-19](#), the novel coronavirus.

The individual diagnosed was a passenger on the Grand Princess cruise ship that returned to San Francisco from Mexico on February 21. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identified the cruise as a source of exposure for COVID-19. The patient is an older man who is being treated in a Marin County hospital. Marin HHS will not release additional information about the patient or the hospital to protect the medical privacy of the patient, family, and hospital staff.

Public health officials have identified those who have been in close contact with the patient. Those individuals have been isolated and are being evaluated.

This is the first case of COVID-19 affecting a Marin resident. A [previously reported case](#) in Marin was an asymptomatic patient transferred from Travis Air Force Base in Solano County to a local hospital. That patient has remained well and was released to return to their home outside of Marin.

“With over 100 cases statewide, we’re unfortunately not surprised to see a case here in Marin,” said Dr. Matt Willis, [Marin County Public Health Officer](#). “We are monitoring the situation closely and the virus spreads regionally, working in concert with the CDC, California Department of Public Health, and regional health departments.”

The best way to reduce the risk of becoming infected with a respiratory virus, whether the flu or COVID-19, is to practice good hygiene:

- Wash your hands *frequently* with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially before eating, after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing;
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water is not available;

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- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or crook of your elbow (not your hands). If you use a tissue, throw it away and wash your hands afterward;
- Avoid touching your face;
- Stay home from work or school if you have a fever or are feeling sick;
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe;
- Get your flu shot to protect against flu.

Residents are encouraged to seek factual information about COVID-19 and not fall prey to rumors circulating on social media. Local coronavirus updates can be found on the [Marin County COVID-19 webpage](#) and sign-up to receive updates by email. In addition, individuals can contact Marin HHS with non-medical COVID-19 questions by calling a dedicated [information call center](#) at 415-473-7191 or by [email](#).

While Marin HHS is not issuing cancellations of large gatherings at this time, the department continues to carefully monitor the COVID-19 situation both locally and regionally to guide any potential event cancellations.

“Older adults and those with other existing medical vulnerabilities are at the greatest risk for severe disease if infected with COVID-19,” said Dr. Lisa Santora, Deputy Public Health Officer. “Nearly one-in-three Marin residents is over age 60, so it’s especially important that health officials and residents work together to protect our seniors from infection. For that reason, we recommend that older adults and those with conditions that may weaken their immune system consider refraining from attending large gatherings of 100 or more people.”

A community meeting about COVID-19 is taking place at 6 p.m. March 9 at the Marin County Office of Education in San Rafael, and residents are encouraged to watch the meeting [live on Facebook](#). Willis will be included on the panel of experts.

On March 3, the County of Marin proclaimed a local state of emergency and Marin HHS proclaimed a public health emergency as COVID-19 continued its worldwide spread. Following the State of California’s own emergency declaration, the County’s two proclamations makes it eligible for reimbursement for costs associated with the health emergency. The Marin County Board of Supervisors is expected to ratify both documents at its March 10 regular meeting. Several other Bay Area counties have made similar proclamations.

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MEDIA NOTE:

A video statement from Dr. Matt Willis is [on YouTube](#). He is available for interviews between noon and 2 p.m. Monday, March 9. Call 415-473-4163 to schedule an interview time.

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS:

[California Department of Public Health Public Affairs](#): 916-445-6350

[CDC Media Relations](#): 404-639-3286