For Immediate Release

March 9, 2020

New Recommendations for Indoor Events in Marin

Public Health Officer’s guidelines address large, non-essential indoor gatherings

San Rafael, CA – Out of an abundance of caution, the Marin County Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is recommending the cancellation or postponement of nonessential indoor gatherings of more than 100 people to prevent the spread of COVID-19, commonly called the novel coronavirus. This recommendation is in place for two weeks and will be re-evaluated as new information becomes available.

Marin HHS’ Public Health Division is not making the same recommendation for outdoor events at this time because the risk for transmission outdoors is low.

“We recognize that gathering together is vital for community well-being, and we do not take these steps lightly,” Public Health Officer Dr. Matt Willis said. “With increased transmission of COVID-19 regionally, we have to prioritize health first. We will reevaluate our recommendations as the situation unfolds here in Marin.”

Event organizers should consider the California Department of Public Health guidelines if they choose to move forward with an event. In addition, organizers should:

- Collaborate and coordinate with community partners including the local public health department, hotels where participants are staying, airlines, event venues, and other partners.
- Use event messaging and communications to promote everyday preventive health messages to your participants and staff, including Marin HHS’s educational posters in English and Spanish.
- Recommend that participants minimize close contact (e.g., recommending no hand shaking or hugging)
- Promote messages that discourage people who are sick from attending events.

“While Marin has not seen evidence of community transmission, Marin is a popular destination for community events and activities,” Willis said. “These guidelines are in response to increased COVID-19 activity across the region.”

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Marin HHS announced the first local case of COVID-19 on March 9, the same day it launched a hotline service (415-473-7191) to answer public questions about the disease.

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;
- 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.

Visit the official Marin County coronavirus webpage to review answers to frequently asked questions or subscribe to receive email updates. Individuals can contact Marin HHS with nonmedical questions about the coronavirus by calling 415-473-7191 weekdays between 9:30 a.m. and noon and 1-5 p.m. or by emailing COVID-19@marincounty.org.

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