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Promoting an Optimal State of Wellness in Lake County

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Shelter-in-Place Order Extended Through May 17

Gary Pace MD, MPH

Lake County, CA (May 1, 2020) – By now, we are all wondering when this shutdown from the Coronavirus is going to be over. The anticipated surge in infections and hospitalizations in our area never materialized. While the evidence suggests a surge was averted due to unprecedented “Shelter-in-Place” orders that went into effect March 19, it came at a tremendous cost. In fact, social and economic impacts are being felt across California’s communities, and government and non-profit organizations are taking great measures to meet truly historic needs.

Since we loosened local restrictions just a week ago, we are currently waiting to see if there is an increase in infections over the next few weeks, before instituting further changes. We also have a need to understand the course the Governor plans to take, and align with State mandates.

Therefore, the current Lake County Public Health Orders will continue, largely unchanged, for another two weeks, through May 17. In response to public input, the new Order will permit fishing from non-motorized boats, noting the prohibition of sailboats will remain in place, for now. Additionally, some clarification is added regarding permitted golf activities. Please see the Order for specifics.

In California, Governor Newsom’s State Order is the overriding rule; the local order can be more restrictive than the State’s, but not looser. Unfortunately, we have not been provided a clear timeline or indication of specific changes he intends to make.

The Governor did recently allow elective surgeries to resume, after suspending them for several weeks to allow the hospitals to better prepare for a possible surge. Lake County residents are encouraged to reach out to their medical providers, to begin catching up on more routine medical and surgical visits.

Due to the tremendous unemployment and business stress we are facing, efforts are ongoing to prepare to open the economy back up in a well-thought-out and safe manner. County leadership is meeting with local business partners to sketch out safe ways for different sectors of the economy to reopen, at the earliest responsible time.

Governor Newsom has put forth several preconditions to loosening his Stay-at-Home Order, including:

- Adequate testing;

- A manageable level of infections;
- Good hospital surge capacity;
- Adequate protections for workers and the public; and
- Adequate sick time for workers to be able to stay home when not well

Most of these factors are present to some extent in Lake County, and we are hard at work on getting adequate testing capacity in place, including some Drive-Thru testing, announced yesterday afternoon.

As we begin to reopen the economy, we will start with the lowest risk activities.

Events involving large groups (e.g. fairs, weddings, festivals) will resume much later on. I do not expect the resumption of these large events to occur for several months, and am therefore recommending cancellation of the Lake County Fair this year.

In addition, High School graduations should make plans for virtual ceremonies, due to the near impossibility of having a safe and effective in-person ceremony.

Also, I am sad to say that weddings will need to scale way down, or be postponed.

Unfortunately, these important events present too great a risk for viral transmission due to the mixing of large numbers of people.

Particularly as restrictions begin to loosen, it is essential that people continue taking precautions:

- Maintain social distancing, keep good hygiene, and preferably wear masks when out.
- Vulnerable populations (over 65 and/or with chronic medical conditions) should continue to stay safe at home.
- We strongly discourage people from crossing county lines, since this is an important way that the virus spreads.

For Lake County-specific Coronavirus information, or to pre-register for Drive-Thru testing, please visit the Lake County Health Services Department's website, <http://health.co.lake.ca.us/Coronavirus>.

The Lake County Coronavirus Response Hub has additional valuable resources: <https://lake-co-ca-coronavirus-response-lakecoca.hub.arcgis.com/>

If you still have questions, send an email request: MHOAC@lakecountyca.gov.

You can also call during business hours: 707-263-8174

Lake County has worked our way through many disasters in the past. Your actions in response to COVID-19 so far have very probably saved many lives.

We will get through this difficult time. We ask your continued patience and creativity to make this summer tolerable.

Thank you.

Gary Pace MD, MPH