

DECLARATION NO. 2020-01

DECLARATION OF A LOCAL HEALTH EMERGENCY IN LASSEN COUNTY RELATIVE TO THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS – COVID-19

WHEREAS, a novel coronavirus, COVID-19, causes infectious disease and was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China in December 2019. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath; outcomes have ranged from mild to severe illness, and in some cases death.

WHEREAS, Chinese health officials have reported tens of thousands of cases of COVID-19 in China, with the virus reportedly spreading from person-to-person. COVID-19 illnesses, most of them associated with travel from Wuhan, are also being reported in a growing number of international locations, including the United States.

WHEREAS, the number of reported cases of COVID-19 has escalated dramatically over a short period of time, and on January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a "public health emergency of international concern" followed by a declaration on March 11, 2020, characterizing the outbreak as a "pandemic."

WHEREAS, WHO officials now report that sustained human-to-human transmission of the virus is occurring. Transmission from asymptomatic individuals has been documented. Suspected community transmission of the virus is occurring in the United States. Although the majority of individuals infected with COVID-19 recover from the disease without special treatment, there is significant potential for serious infection and death.

WHEREAS, on January 31, 2020, United States Health and Human Service Secretary Alex M. Azar II declared a public health emergency for the United States to aid the nation's healthcare community in responding to COVID-19.

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has determined that the virus presents a serious public health threat.

WHEREAS, on February 2, 2020, the federal government initiated the suspension of the entry of foreign nationals who were in China within the past fourteen (14) days. United States citizens, residents, and their immediate family members who were in the Hubei Province and other parts of mainland China are screened upon their entry into the United States. Those without symptoms traveling from areas of China (other than Hubei Province) are allowed to continue to their final destination, but are requested to self-quarantine in coordination with local public health officials for up to fourteen (14) days.

WHEREAS, on February 27, 2020, the CDC issued new guidelines to screen individuals suffering from a fever and/or signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough or shortness of breath) for COVID-19 for a history of travel from China, Iran, Italy, Japan, and South Korea as well as patients suffering from a fever with severe acute lower respiratory illness (e.g., pneumonia, ARDS) requiring hospitalization and without alternative explanatory diagnosis (e.g., influenza).

WHEREAS, on March 2, 2020, Lassen County Public Health opened a Department Operation Center (DOC) for monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic in communication with the federal Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), California Department of Public Health (CDPH), and locally with Banner Lassen Medical Center, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies, and our health care providers to ensure they have the latest up to date CDC guidance on recommended infection prevention.

WHEREAS, COVID-19 rapidly evolved and on March 13, 2020 there are one thousand six hundred and twenty-nine (1629) confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the United States and forty-one (41) confirmed fatalities in the United States, as well as one hundred and fifty three thousand five hundred and seventeen (153,517) confirmed cases of COVID-19 and five thousand seven hundred and thirty-five (5,735) fatalities worldwide.

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that there will be more confirmed cases in California and the State of Nevada from non-travel, community transmission due to the increase of these cases in the country, combined with the worldwide uncontrolled spread of COVID-19.

WHEREAS, according to the United State Census Bureau Quick Facts for Lassen County approximately 15.2% of Lassen County's population is age 65 years or over, and older adults and individuals with underlying health conditions are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19.

WHEREAS, on March 17, 2020, Lassen County opened a call center to provide callers with information about COVID-19.

WHEREAS, on March 18, 2020, the Lassen County Department of Public Health opened a Joint Information Center to arrange all incident-related public information activities among various local agencies and organizations performing critical emergency information, crisis communications, and public affairs functions.

WHEREAS, on March 19, 2020, the Governor of the State of California wrote in a letter to the President of the United States that “We project that roughly 56 percent of our [California] population - 25.5 million people – will be infected with the virus [COVID-19] over an eight week period.”

WHEREAS, on March 19, 2020, the Lassen County Office of Emergency Services opened its Emergency Operations Center for the purpose of serving the planning, coordination, and asset allocation to respond to COVID-19.

WHEREAS, the Lassen County’s in-custody jail population and the staff who serve them are at greater risk of COVID-19 exposure due to the confined living and working conditions in the jail, challenges associated with isolation and containment in that environment, and difficulty of preventing introduction of infection due to the large numbers of people moving in and out of the facilities each day.

WHEREAS, the local emergency response is focusing on ensuring the health and safety of those most at risk of complications from COVID-19 disease.

WHEREAS, California Health and Safety Code section 101080 authorizes the County Health Officer to declare a local health emergency in the County, or any part thereof, whenever the Health Officer reasonably determines that there is an imminent and proximate threat of the introduction of any contagious, infectious, or communicable disease, chemical agent, non-communicable biologic agent, toxin, or radioactive agent.


WHEREAS, this declaration enables the County to more effectively respond to the outbreak, seek and utilize mutual aid, potentially obtain reimbursement, and ensure that the County's public health professionals and providers have all necessary personal protective equipment to provide quality care and keep our community safe.

Now, therefore, pursuant to Health & Safety Code section 101080, the Lassen County Health Officer declares:

- 1) The potential introduction of COVID-19 into Lassen County, including within the City of Susanville and upon the sovereign lands of the Susanville Indian Rancheria, is a threat to the public health within the meaning of Health & Safety Code section 101080.
- 2) A local health emergency is declared in Lassen County, including within the City of Susanville and upon the sovereign lands of the Susanville Indian Rancheria, commencing on or about 11 a.m./p.m. of the 20th day of March, 2020.
- 3) This Declaration shall remain in effect for no longer than seven (7) days unless it has been ratified by the Lassen County Board of Supervisors.

DATE:

3/20/20


KENNETH KORVER, MD
Health Officer
County of Lassen