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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 2, 2020

Spike in COVID-19 After Start of Fall Semester, College Age Persons Required to Comply with State Order and Stop Gathering

BUTTE COUNTY, Calif. – Since August 24, 2020, Butte County Public Health (BCPH) has identified major increases in COVID-19 cases in Chico among people ages 18-24 living near the CSU, Chico campus. As the Labor Day weekend approaches, BCPH urges all residents, especially those ages 18-24, to comply with State Orders and avoid all gatherings and parties with anyone outside of your immediate household.

The total number of lab confirmed COVID-19 cases among people ages 18-24 in Butte County between Monday, August 24th and Monday, August 31st was 557. **Of those cases, 464 are from the Chico area.** Seventy-eight percent of COVID-19 cases in Chico in this time period were from people ages 18-24. This increase in cases comes just over one week after the start of the CSU, Chico fall semester.

While BCPH cannot confirm that all cases associated with people ages 18-24 in Chico are college students, the increase in cases does coincide closely with the start of school and the influx of a large number of college-age students.

A comparison between the time periods corresponding to the last two weeks of July and the last two weeks of August shows a sharp increase in cases among people ages 18-24 yrs. In the 14 day period between July 20th through August 2nd, 89 cases were confirmed compared with 314 cases during the 14 day period between August 17-30.

Gatherings of any size are required to be postponed or canceled. A gathering is when people from separate households come together, even if they are close friends or family members.

“People who continue going to parties and mixing with others who do not live in their immediate household, place their friends, roommates, significant others, co-workers and family at risk for getting COVID-19,” stated Dr. Bernstein, Butte County Public Health Officer. “The only way for our community and our economy to start to reopen is to reduce the spread – and the health and economic consequences – of the COVID-19 pandemic by preventing the spread of the virus.”

Residents should continue to take prevention actions to stop and slow the spread of COVID-19, including:

- Wear a face covering when in public
- Wash your hands often
- Keep at least six feet of physical distance when in public
- Stop mixing with people you don't live with
- Stay home if you are sick
- Avoid sick people

“The transition to virtual-only learning doesn't mean the University community can relax its commitment to keeping ourselves and those around us in the larger community safe,” said Chico State President Gayle Hutchinson. “The recent and rapid spread of the virus is evidence that we must improve our efforts and follow [COVID-19 best practices](#) like physical distancing, wearing face coverings, and washing hands. Over

the Labor Day weekend, we urge students in particular to avoid large gatherings and parties, and contact Chico State's COVID-19 Hotline at 530-898-2222 if you develop symptoms or need advice." COVID-19 spreads from person-to-person who are in close contact (within 6 feet) for 15 minutes or more, especially those who are not wearing a face covering.

Anyone who has had close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or is being tested, should self-quarantine for 14 days from the last day of exposure and monitor themselves for symptoms. Be alert for symptoms of dry cough, shortness of breath and a fever. Additional COVID-19 symptoms include:

- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

If you develop symptoms, contact your healthcare provider or one of the testing location in Butte County. View a list of testing locations in Butte County: www.buttecounty.net/ph/COVID19/Testing

Learn more about COVID-19 in Butte County: www.buttecounty.net/COVID-19

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