



Public Health Department

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Health Advisory

To: Butte County School Districts and Nurses

From: Andy Miller, M.D. (signed original on file)

Date: February 11, 2020

Re: 2019 Novel Coronavirus (nCoV) Guidance for School Districts and Nurses

Background as of Feb. 11, 2020, 8:00 am

There are currently no persons under investigation (PUI) and no confirmed cases of 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in Butte County. However, China is experiencing an expanding outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). This virus first emerged in the city of Wuhan in Hubei Province, China, with limited spread to 23 other countries to date. Limited person to person transmission has been documented outside of China. The first case in the United States was announced on January 21, 2020. To date, there are 13 total cases in the US, (7) of which are in California (Los Angeles County, Orange County, San Benito County, and Santa Clara County). **At this time, the immediate risk in Butte County community is considered to be very low.** As a reminder, both influenza A and influenza B viruses continue to circulate widely in Butte County. For up-to-date information regarding 2019-nCoV, see the California Department of Public Health website at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx> or the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

What you need to know about 2019-nCoV

- Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. They usually cause mild respiratory illnesses such as the common cold. Some coronaviruses have caused more severe illness, such as severe Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). 2019-nCoV is a new coronavirus that had not been seen in humans before December 2019.
- When person-to-person spread has occurred with SARS and MERS, it occurs through respiratory droplets, such as are produced with coughing, similar to how influenza and other respiratory pathogens spread. The situation with regard to 2019-nCoV is still unclear.
- While severe illness, including illness resulting in deaths, have been reported, other patients have had milder illness. It is unclear how easily this virus is spreading between people. It takes 2-14 days after a person gets the virus in their body to become ill.
- Most people with the illness report symptoms similar to the flu, including runny nose, headache, cough, sore throat, fever, and shortness of breath.

- **CDC recommends all travelers from China (including school students, staff members, and volunteers) arriving in the U.S. AFTER February 2, 2020 at 2 pm stay at home, away from others, and monitor their health for 14 days.** This recommendation to exclude students, staff, and volunteers from school is effective Monday, February 3, 2020. This measure was put in place because of an increasing number of cases of 2019-nCoV in China.
- **Persons who have arrived from China prior to February 3, 2020 are at lower risk and do not need to be excluded.** All travelers from China arriving BEFORE February 2, 2020 at 2 pm can continue to attend school and should take the following steps:
 - Watch for any changes in health for 14 days after leaving China
 - If fever, cough, or difficulty breathing develops during this 14 day period, avoid contact with others, and call his/her healthcare provider to tell them about the symptoms and travel history.
- Please note that the risk of exposure to this new coronavirus in China is increasing over time. Consistent with CDC guidance on returning travelers from China, Butte County Public Health will be communicating with travelers returning from mainland China to provide guidance about limiting public interactions for 14 days.
- At this time, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan do not have widespread transmission of the novel coronavirus and are not considered part of mainland China for this guidance.

CDC guidance on returning travelers is available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html>

Actions Requested of Schools and School Districts

- In the unusual event that a student, staff member, or volunteer, is identified who:
 - recently traveled from an area of the world experiencing an outbreak of 2019-nCoV, AND
 - has symptoms of respiratory illness, such as fever and cough, provide the person with a face mask to wear, send them home, and immediately contact BCPH. If possible, place the person in a separate room away from others until they can go home. If medical care is necessary, advise the ill person to first call the healthcare provider to inform the provider of the symptoms and travel history.
- **Other California counties have reported that students and others have been stigmatized. Schools are urged to ensure students' and staffs' privacy to help prevent discrimination.**
- **For assistance in assessing and managing suspect cases, call the BCPH Communicable Disease Program:**
 - During business hours, Mon-Fri (8 am - 5 pm): (530) 552-3929
 - For after hours, weekends, or holidays: (530) 332-2462
- **At this time, there is low risk to residents of Butte County from 2019-nCoV, but schools can take common-sense precautions to prevent the spread of all infectious diseases.** These precautions will be also helpful to prevent the spread of other common illness such as influenza and gastroenteritis.
- **Encourage all students, parents, and staff to take everyday preventive actions:**
 - Stay home when sick.
 - Remain at home until fever has been gone for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
 - Seek immediate medical care if symptoms become more severe, e.g., high fever or difficulty breathing.

- Use “respiratory etiquette”.
 - Cover cough with a tissue or sleeve. See [CDC's Cover Your Cough page](#) for multilingual posters and flyers.
 - Provide adequate supplies within easy reach, including tissues and no-touch trash cans.
 - Wash hands frequently.
 - Encourage hand washing by students and staff through education, scheduled time for handwashing, and the provision of adequate supplies.
 - Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces.
 - Separate sick students and staff from others until they can go home. When feasible, identify a “sick room” through which others do not regularly pass.
 - Encourage flu vaccine for those who haven’t had it this season to reduce illnesses and absences on campus (but won’t prevent coronavirus illnesses).
- Review and ensure enforcement of your school’s sick child and ill staff policies.
 - Designate a staff member as a single point of contact to communicate with BCPH regarding suspect 2019-nCoV cases.
 - Review and update your school policies and emergency plans related to outbreak and communicable diseases response.
 - As the novel coronavirus situation is fluid and evolving, please refer calls or inquiries from parents and the general public to the [CDC website](#) at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html> for the most up-to-date information.

CDC Resources:

- [What to do if you are sick with 2019 Novel Coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html) at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>
- [2019-nCoV: What the Public Should Do](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/what-you-should-do.html) at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/what-you-should-do.html>
- [Frequently Asked Questions and Answers](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html) at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>
- [Novel Coronavirus Information for Travelers](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html) at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

Categories of urgency levels:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.