



# County of San Diego

**NICK MACCHIONE, FACHE**  
AGENCY DIRECTOR

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY**  
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES  
3851 ROSECRANS STREET, MAIL STOP P-578  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92110-3134  
(619) 531-5800 • FAX (619) 542-4186

**WILMA J. WOOTEN, M.D., M.P.H.**  
PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

March 14, 2020

**TO:** Reservations, Tribal Nations, and Casinos

**FROM:** Wilma J. Wooten, M.D., M.P.H.,  
Public Health Officer & Director,  
Public Health Services

**RE: COVID-19 PLANNING AND RESPONSE EFFORTS**

I am sending you, our valued partners, this communication on behalf of the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) Public Health Services (PHS) department (local health department). The novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) global outbreak is rapidly changing day-to-day. I hope this letter provides you with helpful information and guidance to assist you in your efforts to provide support and assurance to your employees and members of your community.

It is important to know that, while the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers that this is a serious public health threat, currently, the risk for the general American public remains low. That could, however, change at any time as the situation remains fluid. Globally, as of March 13, 2020, at 4:18 PM, there have been over 140,875 [cases and 5,359 deaths](#) associated with COVID-19. Nationwide, there have been [1,629 confirmed cases in the United States](#) (U.S.), including [247 in California](#), with numbers changing by the hour. It is important for you to continue to follow updates on the local, state, national, and global situations, as the virus inevitably will continue to spread for some time.

Community-acquired infections have occurred in various U.S. locations. We are starting to see positive cases in San Diego County. In the last week, the disease has spread to over [130 countries, and as yesterday has been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization](#). Therefore, we must be prepared to respond accordingly.

This letter provides guidance to you and your leadership to prepare for a COVID-19 outbreak or pandemic. Visitors experiencing symptoms or who are ill and health care personnel (HCP) are the most likely sources of introduction of COVID-19 into a facility. CDC recommends aggressive visitor restrictions and enforcing sick leave policies for ill HCP, even before COVID-19 is identified in a community or facility. In addition, the County encourages your facilities and organizations to:

- Sign up to get County News Center stories emailed directly to you [here](#) and encourage your staff of your organizations to do the same;
- Review and disseminate the County of San Diego [Fact Sheets](#) to your staff;

- Develop and implement strategies to protect your workforce from COVID-19, while ensuring continuity of operations. (CDC recommends that during a COVID-19 outbreak, all sick employees should stay home and away from the workplace, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene should be encouraged, and routine cleaning of commonly touched surfaces should be performed regularly);
- Review your facility's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP);
- Develop or update policies and procedures regarding sick leave;
- Develop or update policies and procedures regarding telecommuting (i.e., working from home);
- Develop or update policies and procedures regarding other social distancing strategies, such as videoconferencing for meetings and canceling large events;
- Develop or update pandemic planning documents;
- Develop or update any other guidance documents specific to your facilities to contain the spread of COVID-19; and
- Ensure review of all the above documents by your leadership, staff and contractors.

The County is asking you to share the following information with your leadership, employees, volunteers, and families, as well as begin planning efforts. Included in this communication are links to some key interim guidance, which is based on what is currently known. As additional guidance is developed, this information will be posted on our [County website](#).

- [CDPH Guidance for Prevention of COVID-19 Transmission in Entertainment Venues](#), March 13, 2020
- [State Health and Emergency Officials Release Guidance to Prevent the Transmission of COVID-19 in Gambling Venues, Theme Parks and Theaters](#), March 13, 2020
- [Resources for State, Local, Territorial and Tribal Health Departments](#), March 9, 2020
- [Preventing COVID-19 Spread in Communities](#), March 2, 2020
- [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#), February 2020
- [CDPH Guidance for Mass Gatherings and Large Community Events](#), March 7, 2020
- [CDC Interim Guidance for Community and Faith-Based Organizations](#), March 3, 2020
- [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#), February 26, 2020

Please review the CDC website for additional guidance that may be of interest to you and your community. This guidance is based on what is currently known. As further guidance is developed, this information will be posted on the [County](#) and/or the [CDC](#) webpages additionally the National Indian Health Board is committed to serving Tribal Nations in response to the coronavirus outbreak. There will be an all Tribes call on COVID-19 on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 3:30 PM Eastern Time (12:30 PM Pacific Time). This call is intended to update Tribes on COVID-19. Tribal Leaders will have an opportunity to provide comments and ask questions to federal officials. IHS has also scheduled a COVID-19 call. Details are below:

**Date: Thursday, March 19, 2020**

**Time: 3:30 PM – 4:30 PM (Eastern Standard Time)**

**Conference Call: 800-857-5577 | Participant Passcode: 6703929**

**Webinar Adobe Connect: <https://ihs.cosocloud.com/r4k6jib09mj/>**

**Participant Password: ihs123**


The County of San Diego has an established preparedness and response system in place. This process brings together observation of those potentially affected, criteria to guide evaluation of a patient under investigation, epidemiological investigation, public health laboratory testing, education and outreach, and levels of response. To date, the County has taken numerous actions in accordance with the [Consumer Version of the COVID-19 Response Plan](#).

We are all in this together with one singular mission - to protect the public and prevent the spread of this virus. I want to emphasize that your decisive leadership, action, and support are essential, and your partnership is greatly appreciated. If your employees or members of your communities have questions or concerns related to COVID-19, please encourage them to call 2-1-1 for general information.

For additional information about the outbreak and associated resources, please go to the coronavirus websites at [CDC](#) and the [County of San Diego](#). There you will find the latest CDC guidance and local information, respectively. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at [MOC.PHO.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:MOC.PHO.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov).

Thank you for your continued partnership and support to keep the residents of San Diego County healthy, safe, and thriving.

Sincerely,

  
WILMA J. WOOTEN, M.D., M.P.H.  
Public Health Officer & Director  
Public Health Services

cc: Helen Robbins-Meyer, County of San Diego, Chief Administrative Officer  
Nick Macchione, County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency, Director