



## Public Health Brief

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### "The Talk"

Remember that awkward 5 minute "Talk" you either gave to a teenager or received from a parent regarding everything you needed to know about the birds and the bees? Now that I have your attention, this is my heart to heart talk about coronavirus to Alpine County.

You have undoubtedly seen the troubling and rapidly increasing number of cases and deaths throughout the world, the US, and California. We are blessed here in Alpine County without any community spread in our immediate area, which includes Calaveras, Amador, and Douglas Counties, Carson City, and South Lake Tahoe. There are some cases in Calaveras, Amador, and Carson City, but all are travel related. Of course, this information could change at any time.

What does that mean for us? We have a unique opportunity to take this very seriously and prevent significant impact to the population of Alpine County. But that must be NOW! Our goal is to preserve the health and safety of our community, and all of us have a role to play in making this happen.

To start with, remember who is most vulnerable to serious disease and death. It is seniors over the age of 59, and persons of any age with underlying medical conditions including heart disease, lung disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, and cancer. Those of us who are seniors especially need to make substantial changes to our lifestyles.

As someone has stated, "Coming together means staying apart". The Governor has given a directive that all unnecessary activity outside of the home should be stopped. The legitimate reasons for being out include trips to the grocery store, gas station, pharmacy, or bank. Contact with restaurants should all be take-out or delivery. There should be no gatherings of any kind. Walk your dog, go for a hike, sit and enjoy the sunshine!

All county sponsored activities have been canceled, the schools are closed, and non-essential services will be delayed. Essential county services include law enforcement, volunteer fire, keeping our roads clear, clinic, public health, and others functions as determined by the Board of Supervisors and the County Administrative



**Public Health**

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Alpine County Health Department, 75-B Diamond Valley Rd., Markleeville, CA 96120

Alpine County Board of Supervisors, Phone: (530) 694-2281

District 1: Donald M. Jardine, District 2: Ron Hames, District 3: Katherine Rakow,

District 4: Terry Woodrow, District 5: David Griffith

Officer (CAO). We have declared a local emergency and a local health emergency in order to be eligible for any state or federal funds that might become available, and to efficiently deploy our staff in a manner best suited to the requirements of the response.

Let's tackle some questions that you – the public - are asking.

Testing: Let's face it head on – the ability to have large numbers of people tested in the US is wholly inadequate. That being said, testing is available in our local area for those who need it. The real question is – who needs it, and how would you get testing done?

Who needs it? Testing requires a physician authorization. Highest priority is for healthcare workers who have been exposed to cases. Others who qualify include symptomatic persons (those with cough and fever) with exposure risks from cruise ships or hot spots with lots of disease activity, hospitalized persons with unexplained pneumonia, seniors, and persons of any age with underlying medical conditions who develop symptoms.

How can you get testing done? CALL – DO NOT JUST SHOW UP UNANNOUNCED – your healthcare provider to explain your request and your situation. The Health Clinic in Alpine County is only open 2 days per week. Testing can be requested by qualified persons during this time after evaluation. At all other times, you must have a Plan B – another provider, clinic or Health Center, Urgent Care, or Emergency Room. DO NOT CALL 911 UNLESS YOU HAVE A TRUE EMERGENCY!

Child-care and playdates, etc. since school is closed: We appreciate that pre-school and school closures put working parents in a difficult spot. We suggest that any groups of children be as consistent as possible to minimize cross contamination between multiple groups of children. Groups should be small, less than 10 children per site. Meticulous hygiene measures should be taken – refer to the Public Health Brief from March 12<sup>th</sup> titled “Hunker Down” for details.

Most important – Stay home if you are sick. If you have a fever and cough, treat the fever and cough with over-the-counter meds. If you develop shortness of breath, are sicker than you are comfortable with, or have questions, please call your healthcare provider. Most people who get this COVID-19 infection recover and do well. In your household, have the discussion about what role you will play in keeping the whole community well. Remember – we are all in this together and will only be strong as we draw closer – while we are apart! If you have any concerns about your mental health, please call Behavioral Health Services at 530-694-1816, or in Bear Valley call 209-753-2831.

For up-to-date information, go to:

<https://www.alpinecountyca.gov/index.aspx?NID=430>

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>



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