



# SAN BENITO COUNTY

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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**PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES**  
*Healthy People in Healthy Communities*

## HEALTH ALERT

Date: January 22, 2020

To: Healthcare providers, pharmacies

From: Martin Fenstersheib, MD, MPH, Interim Health Officer

Subject: Update and Interim Guidance on Outbreak of 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in Wuhan, China

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### Summary

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to closely monitor an outbreak of a 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China that began in December 2019. CDC has established an Incident Management System to coordinate a domestic and international public health response. There are now more than 500 reported cases and 17 deaths associated with this coronavirus strain in Asia. The United States has reported its first confirmed case of this new virus.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause illness in people; numerous other coronaviruses circulate among animals. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can evolve and infect people, as seen with Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (SARS-CoV). Limited information is available at this time to characterize the spectrum of illness associated with the 2019-nCoV. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) are studying the virus and will be providing additional advisories in the coming days.

### Background

Reports indicate that some of the patients visited/worked at the Wuhan South China Seafood City (South China Seafood Wholesale Market) where, in addition to seafood, chickens, bats, marmots, and other wild animals are sold, suggesting a possible zoonotic (animal) origin to the outbreak.

Local authorities have reported negative laboratory test results for seasonal influenza, avian influenza, adenovirus, severe acute respiratory syndrome-associated coronavirus (SARS-CoV), and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) among patients associated with this cluster.

CDC has issued a level 2 travel notice (“practice enhanced precautions”) for this destination. (<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/watch/pneumonia-china>).

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### **Recommendations for Healthcare Providers include:**

- Care is supportive; no vaccine or specific treatment for 2019-nCoV infection is available
  - Healthcare providers should obtain a travel history for patients being evaluated with fever and acute respiratory illness.
  - Patients in the United States who meet the following criteria should be evaluated as a patient under investigation (PUI) in association with the outbreak of 2019-nCoV:
    - 1) Fever AND symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) and in the last 14 days before symptom onset • History of travel from Wuhan City, China • Close contact with a person who is under investigation for 2019-nCoV while that person was ill.
- or-
- 2) Fever OR symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) • Close contact with an ill laboratory-confirmed 2019-nCoV patient and in the last 14 days before symptom onset.

The above criteria are also available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/novel-coronavirus-2019/clinical-criteria.html>. The criteria are intended to serve as guidance for evaluation. Patients should be evaluated and discussed with public health departments on a case-by-case basis if their clinical presentation or exposure history is equivocal (e.g., uncertain travel or exposure).

### **Recommendations for Reporting, Testing, and Specimen Collection**

- Healthcare providers should **immediately** notify both infection control personnel at their healthcare facility and contact San Benito County Public Health Services at (831) 637-5367 and the State health department in the event of a PUI for 2019-nCoV.
- State health departments that have identified a PUI should immediately contact CDC's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at 770-488-7100 and complete a 2019-nCoV PUI case investigation form available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/novel-coronavirus-2019/downloads/pui-form.pdf>. CDC's EOC will assist local/state health departments to collect, store, and ship specimens appropriately to CDC, including during afterhours or on weekends/holidays.
- At this time, diagnostic testing for 2019-nCoV can be conducted only at CDC. Testing for other respiratory pathogens should not delay specimen shipping to CDC. If a PUI tests positive for another respiratory pathogen, after clinical evaluation and consultation with public health authorities, they may no longer be considered a PUI. This may evolve as more information becomes available on possible 2019 nCoV co-infections.

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### **Interim Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients Under Investigation for 2019-nCoV**

- Although the transmission dynamics have yet to be determined, CDC currently recommends a cautious approach to patients under investigation for 2019-nCoV (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/clinical-criteria.html>).
- Such patients should be asked to wear a surgical mask as soon as they are identified and be evaluated in a private room with the door closed, ideally an airborne infection isolation room if available.
- Healthcare personnel entering the room should use standard precautions, contact precautions, airborne precautions, and use eye protection (e.g., goggles or a face shield).
- Immediately notify your healthcare facility's infection control personnel and local health department.
- Guideline for Isolation Precautions: Preventing Transmission of Infectious Agents in Healthcare Setting: <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/isolation/index.html>

### **For More Information**

More information is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> or by calling 800-CDC-INFO | (800-232-4636) | TTY: (888) 232-6348. Healthcare providers can also contact San Benito County Public Health Services at (831) 637-5367 or go to the website at <http://hhsa.cosb.us/publichealth/>.

This guidance will be updated as more information becomes available.

In the meantime, we continue to strongly urge providers to vaccinate for influenza as California continues to see increasing numbers of cases.

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Health Alert: Warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides 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.