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State Adds Regional Approach to COVID Containment Efforts

California Gov. Gavin Newsom today announced the state will enact new restrictions on business sectors based on regional intensive care unit (ICU) capacity to limit spread of COVID-19 and protect health care systems.

The “Regional Stay Home Order” takes effect for at least three weeks if a region’s cumulative ICU capacity falls below 15%. The order is lifted when ICU capacity meets or exceeds 15%, at which time each county is reassigned to a tier based on its local COVID-19 data under the state’s “Blueprint for a Safer Economy.”

The state is divided into five regions, with Humboldt County assigned to the Northern California region which also includes Del Norte, Glenn, Lake, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama and Trinity counties. The Northern California region is expected to have less than 15% capacity by early December, based on state projections.

Humboldt County Deputy Health Officer Dr. Josh Ennis said that in pre-pandemic emergency response, neighboring counties could rely on each other for mutual aid. Now, the entire state is feeling the impacts of COVID-19.

“The regional approach is sensible,” Dr. Ennis said. “Waiting until your most precious resource is gone and you need to lean on others could be catastrophic. Full hospitals transferring patients out-of-county accelerates the filling of surrounding hospitals. In this regard, patients needing critical care—COVID and non-COVID alike—can get the care they deserve.”

The regional order requires people to stay home as much as possible and prohibits private gatherings of any size. Essential activities such as accessing health care and grocery shopping are allowed. Masking and physical distancing will be required at all times in all sectors that remain open.

If the ICU threshold is met and the order takes effect in a region, the state requires the following business sectors to close:

- Outdoor and indoor dining at restaurants; take-out and delivery still allowed
- Indoor and Outdoor Playgrounds
- Indoor Recreational Facilities

- Hair Salons and Barbershops
- Personal Care Services
- Museums, Zoos and Aquariums
- Movie Theaters
- Wineries, Bars, Breweries, Distilleries
- Family Entertainment Centers
- Cardrooms and satellite wagering
- Live Audience Sports
- Amusement Parks.

Additional sectors will be required to put in place additional safety measures, including:

- Outdoor recreational facilities: Allow outdoor operation only without any food, drink or alcohol sales. Additionally, overnight stays at campgrounds will not be permitted.
- Retail: Allow indoor operation at 20% capacity with entrance metering and no eating or drinking in the stores. Additionally, special hours should be instituted for seniors and others with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems.
- Shopping centers: Allow indoor operation at 20% capacity with entrance metering and no eating or drinking in the stores. Additionally, special hours should be instituted for seniors and others with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems.
- Hotels and lodging: Allow to open for critical infrastructure support only.
- Restaurants: Allow only for take-out, pick-up or delivery.
- Offices: Allow remote only except for critical infrastructure sectors where remote working is not possible.
- Places of worship and political expression: Allow outdoor services only.
- Entertainment production including professional sports: Allow operation without live audiences. Additionally, testing protocol and “bubbles” are highly encouraged.

The following sectors can remain open when a remote option is not possible as long as facial coverings and physical distancing measures are in place at all times:

- Critical infrastructure
- Schools that are already open for in-person learning
- Non-urgent medical and dental care
- Child care and pre-K.

The state continues to update its COVID-19 website. Additional information is available at covid19.ca.gov/stay-home-except-for-essential-needs/#regional

For the most recent COVID-19 information, visit cdc.gov or cdph.ca.gov. Local information is available at humboldt.gov or during business hours by contacting covidinfo@co.humboldt.ca.us or calling 707-441-5000.

Humboldt County COVID-19 Data Dashboard: humboldt.gov/dashboard,

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