



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 26, 2020

PH20-006

CONTACT: Corey Egel | 916.440.7259 | CDPHpress@cdph.ca.gov

CDC Confirms Possible First Instance of COVID-19 Community Transmission in California

SACRAMENTO – The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention today confirmed a possible first case of person-to-person transmission of COVID-19 in California in the general public. The individual is a resident of Solano County and is receiving medical care in Sacramento County. The individual had no known exposure to the virus through travel or close contact with a known infected individual.

California has a strong health care system and public health infrastructure. California has prepared for the potential spread of diseases, such as H1N1, in the past and is prepared and actively responding to the potential community spread of COVID-19. Contact tracing in this case has already begun.

The health risk from novel coronavirus to the general public remains low at this time. While COVID-19 has a high transmission rate, it has a low mortality rate. From the international data we have, of those who have tested positive for COVID-19, approximately 80 percent do not exhibit symptoms that would require hospitalization. There have been no confirmed deaths related to COVID-19 in the United States to date. California is carefully assessing the situation as it evolves.

“Keeping Californians safe and healthy is our number one priority,” said Dr. Sonia Angell, Director of the California Department of Public Health and State Public Health Officer. “This has been an evolving situation, which California has been monitoring and responding to since COVID-19 cases first emerged in China last year. This is a new virus, and while we are still learning about it, there is a lot we already know. We have been anticipating the potential for such a case in the U.S., and given our close familial, social and business relationships with China, it is not unexpected that the first case in the U.S. would be in California. That’s why California has been working closely with federal and local partners, including health care providers and hospitals, since the outbreak was first reported in China -- and we are already responding.”

As in any public health emergency, the Department of Public Health's Emergency Operations Center has been actively coordinating response efforts across the state and preparing for possible community transmission. California continues to prepare and respond in coordination with federal and local partners.

This would be the first known instance of person-to-person transmission in the general public in the United States. Previously known instances of person-to-person transmission in the United States include one instance in Chicago, Illinois, and one in San Benito County, California. Both cases were after close, prolonged interaction with a family member who returned from Wuhan, China and had tested positive for COVID-19, the disease caused by novel coronavirus. As of today, including this case, California has had 7 travel-related cases, one close contact case, and now one community transmission.

As with any virus, especially during the flu season, the Health Department reminds you there are a number of steps you can take to protect your health and those around you:

- Washing hands with soap and water.
- Avoiding touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick are all ways to reduce the risk of infection with a number of different viruses.
- Staying away from work, school or other people if you become sick with respiratory symptoms like fever and cough.

The California Department of Public Health will not be providing additional information about this patient due to patient confidentiality. For more information about novel coronavirus, please visit the [CDPH website](https://www.cdph.ca.gov).

www.cdph.ca.gov