

# County of Santa Clara

## Public Health Department

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Administrators:

February 3, 2020

I am writing to provide an update regarding the novel coronavirus in our county, and to share updated guidance for students and staff who have recently traveled to China.

The County of Santa Clara Public Health Department has now received confirmation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of two cases of novel coronavirus, one on Friday January 31, and the second on Sunday February 2. Both of these cases had traveled to Wuhan, China in the 14 days before they became ill. Both have been self-isolating at home. The cases are not related to each other. We are reaching out to anyone who may have been in close contact with either case to determine whether they were exposed to the novel coronavirus. All exposed close contacts are being quarantined at home and monitored for symptoms.

To date, we do not have any evidence to suggest that that novel coronavirus is circulating in Santa Clara County or the Bay Area, and public health departments are working hard to keep it that way. As we have all been communicating, the situation is evolving rapidly, and we anticipate this pace of change to continue.

One change is that a recent published report has documented asymptomatic transmission of the virus. Asymptomatic transmission is when a person who does not yet have symptoms nevertheless spreads infections to others. How often this occurs is not known, but if asymptomatic transmission does occur, it would likely occur in the day or two before the infected individual starts showing symptoms.

This evidence of asymptomatic transmission is in part why the federal government has made the decision to formally quarantine all travelers returning to the US from Hubei province (where Wuhan city is located), China, and to ask people returning from other parts of China to voluntarily self-quarantine for 14 days since their last day in China.

Because of the concern of asymptomatic transmission, especially from travelers who returned from Hubei province, we are now asking schools to do the following:

1. If you have students or staff who have been in Hubei province within the last 14 days, please ask them to immediately return home and call the public health department during regular business hours (408-885-3980, M-F 8-5) so that we can provide guidance on monitoring themselves carefully for symptoms for the 14 days since their last day in China.
  - a. Family members of travelers who visited Hubei province within the last 14 days do not need to quarantine at home, but they should also monitor for symptoms and avoid attending large gatherings.
2. Students or staff who have been to other areas of mainland China (this excludes Hong Kong) within the last 14 days should also not come to school. They should monitor themselves for

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symptoms for the 14 days since their last day in China. Per federal guidance being released today, they should also call the public health department during regular business hours (408-885-3980, M-F 8-5) for further guidance.

In either case, if they become symptomatic within 14 days since their last day in China with fever (including chills or night sweats), cough, or shortness of breath, they should call a healthcare provider and let them know their travel history and symptoms.

**Please do not require** a physician's clearance to return to work or school for students, employees, and other staff who have returned from traveling and are not sick. We are receiving communications that this is happening, which is impacting the medical system and preventing doctors from seeing patients who are ill.

**We encourage all students and staff to take common-sense precautions to prevent the spread of all infectious diseases, including common illnesses like colds and flu:**

- Encourage all students and staff to stay home when they are sick.
- Those who have a fever at school should go home immediately and stay there for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
- Separate sick students and staff from others in a separate place, until they can be picked up to go home.
- Promote hand hygiene through education and availability of soap, hand sanitizers, and tissues.
- Avoid touching your face, particularly your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Encourage proper cough etiquette—cough or sneeze into a tissue, sleeve, or arm. Do not use your hands.
- Perform routine surface cleaning, particularly for high-touch surfaces.
- Consider not attending or hosting large gatherings. This is where cold, flu, and other respiratory viruses are often spread.

The Public Health Department has a webpage dedicated to novel coronavirus in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese at [sccphd.org/coronavirus](http://sccphd.org/coronavirus). We will keep the webpage updated as we know more. We will monitor the developing situation and inform you of any additional public health recommendations. We deeply appreciate your partnership in communicating this information to students and families. We also greatly appreciate everyone's efforts in staying informed, calm, and thoughtful as we all do our part to help keep our communities safe.

All the best,



Sara H. Cody, MD, Health Officer and Director

County of Santa Clara Public Health Department