



Public Health Brief

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Tuesday January 11, 2022

DECLARATION OF LOCAL HEALTH EMERGENCY REGARDING NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

WHEREAS, Health and Safety Code section 101080 authorizes a local health officer to declare a local health emergency in the health officer's jurisdiction, whenever the health officer reasonably determines that there is an imminent and proximate threat of the introduction of any contagious, infectious, or communicable disease, chemical agent, noncommunicable biologic agent, toxin, or radioactive agent; and

WHEREAS, Health and Safety Code 120175 authorizes each health officer knowing or having reason to believe that any case of the diseases made reportable by regulation of the department, or any other contagious, infectious or communicable disease exists, or has recently existed, within the territory under his or her jurisdiction, shall take measures as may be necessary to prevent the spread of the disease or occurrence of additional cases.

WHEREAS, Health and Safety Code 120175.5 states (a) During an outbreak of a communicable disease, or upon the imminent and proximate threat of a communicable disease outbreak or epidemic that threatens the public's health, a local health officer shall do both of the following:

(1) Promptly notify and update governmental entities within the local health officer's jurisdiction about communicable diseases listed in Section 2500 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations that may affect them, if, in the opinion of the local health officer, action or inaction on the part of the governmental entity might affect outbreak response efforts.



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

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

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(2) Make any relevant information available to governmental entities, including, but not limited to, the locations of concentrations of cases, the number of residents affected, and the measures that the governmental entities should take to assist with outbreak response efforts.

(3) In addition to the actions required under subdivision (a), the local health officer may issue orders to other governmental entities within the local health officer's jurisdiction to take any action the local health officer deems necessary to control the spread of the communicable disease.

(4) A local health officer that provides the notification and information to a governmental entity pursuant to subdivision (a), and the governmental entity that receives the notification and information, shall comply with all applicable state and federal privacy laws.

WHEREAS, Health and Safety Code 120176 states that during an outbreak of communicable disease, or upon the imminent and proximate threat of communicable disease outbreak or epidemic that threatens the public's health, all health care providers, clinics, health care service plans, pharmacies, their suppliers, distributors, and other for-profit and nonprofit entities shall, upon request of the local health officer, disclose to the local health officer inventories of, critical medical supplies, equipment, pharmaceuticals, vaccines, or other products that may be used for the prevention of, or may be implicated in the transmission of communicable disease. The local health officer shall keep this proprietary information confidential.

WHEREAS, the local health emergency shall not remain in effect after seven days from the date of this proclamation unless it has been ratified by the County of Alpine's Board of Supervisors; and

WHEREAS, the Health Officer of the County of Alpine makes the following findings:

The rapid emergence of the highly transmissible COVID-19 Omicron variant coupled with holiday gatherings has led to unprecedented COVID-19 case rates in Alpine County. Instead of several cases every 1-2 weeks, we are now experiencing several new cases per day, and have moved from being the only county in California considered "low risk" into the highest risk category. Those affected include those most vulnerable – the very young, the elderly, those with underlying medical conditions, and those unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated. School facilities in Alpine County have been closed due to a high % of exposures among students and staff, and insufficient staff to sustain a safe learning environment, with only 60% of staff being completely vaccinated, and few students vaccinated. Many businesses have reported cases among staff, including several with congregate housing outbreaks. Some businesses have been forced to shut down or limit services due to lack of staff.



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While data on the Omicron variant is still emerging, it has quickly become the dominant variant in the United States. The high case rates in our region are projected to severely impact capacity in area hospitals over the next weeks. It is extremely transmissible, and the old rule of 6-feet 15-minutes of contact has been rendered obsolete. Vaccines are effective, but not everyone is eligible, and even many who are eligible have not taken advantage of the opportunity to get vaccinated or to receive their booster. Compliance with the California Masking Order is inadequate.

All individuals in Alpine County, especially those who are unvaccinated or not up-to-date with their vaccination (boosted, if eligible) and those at higher risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19, should take personal measures to reduce their risk of acquiring COVID-19. In addition to existing COVID-19 mitigation measures, including vaccination, face coverings, and testing, additional actions can help limit the likelihood of COVID-19 transmission in workplaces and public settings, and

WHEREAS, even though we have multiple avenues available to us in ordering testing kits for COVID-19, including PCR (the gold standard), professional antigen tests done in-house, and at-home over-the-counter (OTC) rapid tests, our supply has been insufficient to meet the demand, is now virtually exhausted, with no assurance the situation will be resolved in the near future, and

WHEREAS, the Health Officer of the County of Alpine does hereby find that there is an imminent and proximate threat to public health from this proliferation of COVID-19 infections in Alpine County.



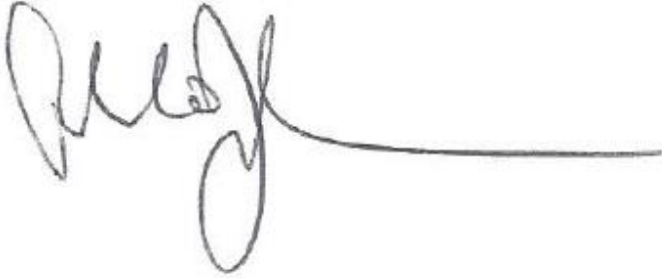
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NOW, THEREFORE, the Health Officer of the County of Alpine hereby declares that a local health emergency now exists in the County of Alpine.

Date: January 11, 2022

Issued by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Johnson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Richard O. Johnson, M.D., MPH
Health Officer



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