

The County of Yuba

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Jennifer Vasquez, Director

5730 Packard Ave., Suite 100, P.O. Box 2320, Marysville, California 95901
Phone: (530) 749-6311 FAX: (530) 749-6281



Phuong Luu, MD, MHS
Health Officer
Phone: (530) 749-6366

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Dear Superintendents of Yuba-Sutter Counties:

The COVID-19 situation has certainly become more serious in the past several weeks for the United States and especially in California. I am aware that multiple school districts in the state have decided to close their schools recently. In deliberating on whether school cancellations should be considered, I would like to point to the latest Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for "Considerations of School Closure."

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/considerations-for-school-closure.pdf>

In this guidance, the CDC clearly states that school closure should be considered as part of a larger community mitigation strategy for jurisdictions **with** substantial community transmission of COVID-19. The CDC goes on to state further that for those jurisdictions **without** community spread of COVID-19 – school cancellation should not be considered yet – instead that school districts should prepare through encouragement of good hand hygiene, intensify disinfection and cleaning, require sick students and staff to stay home, and monitor for absenteeism. As of today (March 13, 2020), there are **no** confirmed COVID-19 cases in the Yuba-Sutter region, and no evidence of ongoing community transmission. The joint bi-county Department Operations Center (DOC) continue to do active monitoring and surveillance for COVID-19.

It is not a matter of if schools should close in the Yuba-Sutter region, but *when*. The timing is very important to accomplish the intended consequence which is to stem community transmission if it does arise in our community. The substantial risk of premature school closures when our region has not seen evidence of community transmission is that we run the high likelihood of returning students in a matter of a few weeks back into schools when there might be community transmission. These unintended consequences are significant if school closures are ill-timed.

While we continue to conduct active preparations for the eventuality of school closures and other mitigation measures, I encourage you all to ask parents and guardians to be ready and prepared. Parents and guardians should ensure childcare is available and discuss flexible work schedules or extended leave from work with their employers.

The bi-county coronavirus preparedness team look forward to continuing the close collaboration with you all to ensure students, teachers, staff and the overall bi-county community are healthy and safe. Thank you for all your hard work.

Sincerely,

Phuong Luu, MD, MHS, FACP
Bi-County Health Officer
Yuba County and Sutter County