

VARIANCE TO STAGE 2 OF CALIFORNIA'S ROADMAP TO MODIFY THE STAY-AT-HOME ORDER



COVID-19 COUNTY VARIANCE ATTESTATION FORM

FOR Sierra County

Background

On March 4, 2020 Governor Newsom proclaimed a State of Emergency as a result of the threat of COVID-19, and on March 12, 2020, through Executive Order N-25-20, he directed all residents to heed any orders and guidance of state and local public health officials. Subsequently, on March 19, 2020, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-33-20 directing all residents to heed the State Public Health Officer's Stay-at-Home order which requires all residents to stay at home except for work in critical infrastructure sectors or otherwise to facilitate authorized necessary activities. On April 14th, the State presented the Pandemic Roadmap, a four-stage plan for modifying the Stay-at-Home order, and, on May 4th, announced that entry into Stage 2 of the plan would be imminent.

Given the size and diversity of California, it is not surprising that the impact of COVID-19 has differed across the state. While some counties are still in the initial stabilization phase (Stage 1) of the pandemic response, there are a number of less affected counties. Provided these counties are able to demonstrate an ability to protect the public and essential workers, they may be in a position to adopt aspects of Stage 2 of California's roadmap at a faster pace than the state as a whole. As directed by the Governor in Executive Order N-60-20, this guidance provides information on the criteria and procedures that counties will need to meet in order to move more quickly than other parts of the state through Stage 2 of modifying the Stay-at-Home order. It is recommended that counties consult with cities and other stakeholders as they consider moving through Stage 2.

Local Variance

A county that has met certain criteria in containing COVID-19 may consider increasing the pace at which they advance through Stage 2, but not into Stage 3, of California's roadmap to modify the Stay-at-Home order. Counties are encouraged to first review this document in full to consider if a variance from the state's roadmap is appropriate for the county's specific circumstances. If a county decides to pursue a variance, the local public health officer must:

1. Notify the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and engage in a phone consultation regarding the county's intent to seek a variance.
2. Certify through submission of a written attestation to CDPH that the county has met the readiness criteria (outlined below) designed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Attestations should be submitted by the local public health officer, and accompanied by a letter of support from the County Board of Supervisors, as well as a letter of support from the local hospitals or health care systems. In the event that the county does not have a hospital or health care system within its jurisdiction, a letter of support from the

relevant regional health system(s) is also acceptable. The full submission must be signed by the local public health officer.

All county attestations, and submitted plans for moving through Stage 2 as outlined below, will be posted publicly on CDPH's website.

While not required, CDPH recommends as a best practice the development of a county COVID-19 containment plan by the local public health officer in conjunction with the hospitals and health systems in the jurisdiction, as well as input from a broad range of county stakeholders, including the County Board of Supervisors.

In addition to pre-submission phone consultations, CDPH is available to provide technical assistance to counties as they develop their attestations and COVID-19 containment plans. Please email Jake Hanson at Jake.Hanson@cdph.ca.gov to set up a time with our technical assistance team.

County Name: Sierra County

County Contact: Celia Sutton-Pado, MD

Public Phone Number: 530-993-6700

Readiness for Variance

The county's documentation of its readiness to increase the pace through Stage 2 must clearly indicate its preparedness according to the criteria below. This will ensure that individuals who are at heightened risk, including for example the elderly and those residing in long-term care and locally controlled custody facilities, continue to be protected as a county progresses through California's roadmap to modify the Stay-at-Home order, and that risk is minimized for the population at large.

As part of the attestation, counties must provide specifics regarding their movement through Stage 2 (e.g., which sectors, in what sequence, at what pace), as well as clearly indicate how their plans differ from the state's order.

It is critical that any county that submits an attestation continue to collect and monitor data to demonstrate that the variances are not having a negative impact on individuals or healthcare systems. Counties must also attest that they have identified triggers and have a clear plan and approach if conditions worsen for modifying the pace of advancing through stage 2, including reinstating restrictions, in advance of any state action. Counties must also submit their plan for how they anticipate moving through Stage 2 (e.g., which sectors will be opened, order of opening etc.).

Readiness Criteria

To establish readiness for an increased pace through Stage 2 of California's roadmap to modify the Stay-at-Home order, a county must attest to the following readiness criteria and provide the requested information as outlined below:

- **Epidemiologic stability of COVID-19.** A determination must be made by the county that the prevalence of COVID-19 cases is low enough to be swiftly contained by an epidemiological response. Given the anticipated increase in cases as a result of modifications, this is a foundational parameter that must be met to safely increase the county's progression through Stage 2. The county must attest to:
 - No more than 1 COVID-19 case per 10,000 in the past 14 days prior to attestation submission date.

We have had no COVID-19 cases in Sierra County since the onset of the pandemic.

- No COVID-19 death in the past 14 days prior to attestation submission date.

We have had no COVID-19 deaths in Sierra County since the onset of the pandemic.

- **Protection of Stage 1 essential workers.** A determination must be made by the county that there is clear guidance and the necessary resources to ensure the safety of Stage 1 essential critical infrastructure workers. The county must attest to:
 - Guidance for employers and essential critical infrastructure workplaces on how to structure the physical environment to protect essential workers. Please provide copies of the guidance(s).

Sierra County has prioritized our essential workforce with Healthcare and Emergency Services sectors being priority one. We have instituted a Face covering order that went in to effect on May 1st which provides additional protection to our essential workforce. While these sectors receive guidance from their respective disciplines Sierra County reached out to those serving our county to inquire about any PPE needs. All have been invited and attend a weekly Disaster Council meeting hosted by Sierra County OES where practice guidance is shared across these disciplines. Our Public Health office has reached out to other essential businesses in a variety of ways that include, phone calls, face to face visits ,posting on website, social media and distributing flyers. Distribution of guidance materials have been on topics including, physical distancing, hand washing/sanitizing, signs and symptoms of the coronavirus, face coverings and many more. Regular contact occurs with all of our essential business that include takeout food facilities, food banks, grocery stores, gas stations, hardware, senior center, schools, child care, as well as county and city government, forest service. Please see our website for examples.
<http://sierracounty.ca.gov/582/Coronavirus-COVID-19>

<http://sierracounty.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/4666/Sierra-County-Facial-Covering-Order---May-1-2020?bidId=>

<http://sierracounty.ca.gov/599/Business-Reopening-Plan>

Availability of supplies (disinfectant, essential protective gear) to protect essential workers. Please describe how this availability is assessed.

The Emergency Preparedness Coordinator communicates regularly through monthly regional meetings of the RDMHS, quarterly meetings with our local Healthcare Coalition and our Tri-County Healthcare Coalition where needs of our priority essential worker sectors are addressed. She has reached out regularly by phone and list serve communication to each of our Fire and EMS organizations to check in regarding PPE, hand sanitizer and disinfectants. All of the other essential businesses noted above are regularly contacted personally to inquire about needs and provided contact information should they need assistance with supplies. Supplies are being accessed through a variety of sources including our regular vendors, MHOAC, Cal-OES, local citizens donating face coverings.

- **Testing capacity.** A determination must be made by the county that there is testing capacity to detect active infection that meets the state's most current testing criteria (available on CDPH website). The county must attest to:
 - Minimum daily testing volume to test 1.5 per 1,000 residents, which can be met through a combination of testing of symptomatic individuals and targeted surveillance. Please provide the plan and the county's average daily testing volume for the past week. If the county does not believe a testing volume of 1.5 per 1,000 residents is merited, please provide justification for this.

The total population of Sierra County is approximately 3,000 people and our average daily tests performed is 1 over the past week. Our residents have many available options for testing to meet the testing requirement of approximately 5 tests per day. Two healthcare providers in county have ample collection kits on hand and are willing to test symptomatic or exposed residents. See below for additional options for our residents out of county. All out of county sites are testing symptomatic patients and all Healthcare workers including First Responders. Sierra County has a contract with Shasta County Public Health Laboratory to process high priority specimens and our providers also utilize LabCorp and Quest. We are collaborating with Eastern Plumas Health Care to offer a drive-thru option once they obtain the rapid testing.

Testing availability for at least 75% of residents, as measured by a specimen collection site (including established health care providers) within 30 minutes driving time in urban areas, and 60 minutes in rural areas. Please provide a listing of all specimen collection sites in the county, whether there are any geographic areas that do not meet the criteria, and plans for filling these gaps. If the county depends on sites in adjacent counties, please list these sites as well.

All testing sites are within 60 minutes of each community in Sierra County.
In county options: Eastern Plumas Health Care- Loyalton, Western Sierra Medical Clinic- Downieville
Out of county options: Tahoe Forest Hospital-Truckee, Eastern Plumas Health Care-Portola, Plumas District Hospital- Quincy, Grass Valley Sierra College, Washoe County- State of Nevada
Optum Sites: Kings Beach and Grass Valley

- **Containment capacity.** A determination must be made by the county that it has adequate infrastructure, processes, and workforce to reliably detect and safely isolate new cases, as well as follow up with individuals who have been in contact with positive cases. The county must attest to:
 - Sufficient contact tracing. For counties that have no cases, there should be at least 15 staff per 100,000 county population trained and available for contact tracing; for counties with small populations, there must be at least one staff person trained and available. Please describe the county's contact tracing plan, including workforce capacity, and why it is sufficient to meet anticipated surge.

Sierra County has one fully trained staff member- Senior Public Health Nurse for contact tracing. She has many years of experience in Communicable Disease contact tracing and surveillance. We have 2 Public Health staff going through the first pilot UCSF on-line contact tracing training and plan to have 2 more staff trained as availability is announced.

Sierra County has the ability to trace and isolate individuals with a positive test result, ensure they are connected to care and also do the same for their close contacts.

- Availability of temporary housing units to shelter at least 15% of county residents experiencing homelessness in case of an outbreak among this population requiring isolation and quarantine of affected individuals. Please describe the county's plans to support individuals, including those experiencing homelessness, who are not able to properly isolate in a home setting by providing them with temporary housing (including access to a private bathroom), for the duration of the necessary isolation or quarantine period.

Sierra County's last Point in Time Homeless count identified 8 homeless individuals across the county. We reached out to our 20 lodging operations in order to inventory those that would consider providing alternative housing for an array of populations, including the homeless. To date we have 35-40 rooms, across the county operations, available to meet our supportive quarantines should they arise. We have a team with representation from Social Services, Behavioral Health and Public Health that have worked to secure resources for ancillary services and goods that may be needed for people while isolated/quarantined. We feel confident about being able to meet the supportive quarantine needs of our homeless and other vulnerable populations now and in surge situation should that occur.

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- **Hospital capacity.** A determination must be made by the county that hospital capacity, including ICU beds and ventilators, and adequate PPE is available to handle standard health care capacity, current COVID-19 cases, as well as a potential surge due to COVID-19. If the county does not have a hospital within its jurisdiction, the county will need to address how regional hospital and health care systems may be impacted by this request and demonstrate that adequate hospital capacity exists in those systems. The county must attest to:
 - County (or regional) hospital capacity to accommodate a minimum surge of 35% due to COVID-19 cases in addition to providing usual care for non-COVID-19 patients. Please describe how this surge would be accomplished, including surge census by hospital, addressing both physical and workforce capacity.

The total population of Sierra County is approximately 3000 people. Sierra County does not have a hospital within our boundaries. We have collaborated with two other Region 3 Counties; Plumas and Lassen, forming the Tri-County Health Care Coalition. There are 4 hospitals participating in the coalition. Surge planning through this coalition accounts for Sierra County patients accessing services at the four hospitals within the coalition. Daily HavBED Polling over the last 30 days indicates consistent ability to meet more than a 35% surge capacity. HavBED polling will continue in order to evaluate if the surge capacity should drop below 35%. Additionally, Sierra County residents access HCF located in Truckee, which is part of Region 4. Tahoe Forest Hospital Surge Planning provides for at least a 35% surge capacity. Surge planning accounts for Sierra County patients accessing services at Tahoe Forest. The East side of Sierra County access HCFs located in Reno and Carson City, Nevada. Those facilities are also operating with more than a 35% surge capacity capability.

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- County (or regional) hospital facilities have a robust plan to protect the hospital workforce, both clinical and nonclinical, with PPE. Please describe the process by which this is assessed.

All four Tri-County hospitals are engaged in robust personal protection procedures through their respective County MHOAC. The following functions are being handled through those points of contact:
The latest PPE guidance regularly shared via the CAHAN System, email, and WebEx.
Monitoring of PPE inventory at all facilities.
Public Health Dept Stockpile of PPE to fill possible supply chain shortages.

- **Vulnerable populations.** A determination must be made by the county that the proposed variance maintains protections for vulnerable populations, particularly those in long-term care settings. The county must attest to:
 - Skilled nursing facilities (SNF) have >14 day supply of PPE on hand for staff, with established process for ongoing procurement from non-state supply chains. Please list the names and contacts of all SNFs in the county along with a description of the system the county has to track PPE availability across SNFs..

There is one SNF located in Sierra County that falls under the management of a parent facility located in Plumas County; Eastern Plumas Health Care. The 25-bed facility located in Sierra County implemented immediate precautions to protect their residents on March 3 when they closed to all visitors and also implemented reverse isolation on April 1. They continue to proactively test, all employees are fit tested, they utilize full PPE, and apply isolation policies to staff. Eastern Plumas Health Care PPE inventory is managed by a single point of contact for all facilities. The Director of Nursing in Sierra County is Loraine Noble lorraine.noble@ephc.org 530-993-6124. They have provided a list of on-hand inventory exceeding a 14-day supply. Additionally, Sierra County Public Health has all PPE needed on hand to meet a 14-day supply for the Skilled Nursing Facility should it be needed.

- **Sectors and timelines.** Please provide details on the county's plan to move through Stage 2. This should include which sectors and spaces will be opened, in what sequence, on what timeline. Please specifically indicate where the plan differs from the state's order. Please note that this variance should not include sectors that are part of Stage 3.

Sierra County's plan does not differ from the State's order. Sierra County requires that all businesses submit a plan to Public Health for reviewal and approval prior to opening.

Stage 2

Early Stage 2 Opening (Whole State) May 8, 2020

- Curb-side Retail
- Manufacturers
- Logistics

Expanded Stage 2 with Attestation (Variance)

May 15, 2020

- Destination retail, including shopping malls and swap meets.
- Personal services, limited to: car washes, pet grooming, tanning facilities, and landscape gardening.
- Office-based businesses (telework remains strongly encouraged)
- Outdoor museums and open gallery spaces
- Childcare

Expanded Stage 2 with Attestation (Variance)

May 20, 2020

- Dine-in restaurants (other amenities, like bars or gaming areas, are not permitted)

Not Permitted in Stage 2

- Personal services such as nail salons, tattoo parlors, gyms and fitness studios
- Hospitality services, such as bars, wineries, tasting rooms and lounges
- Entertainment venues with limited capacities, such as movie theaters, gaming facilities, and pro sports
- Indoor museums, kids museums and gallery spaces, zoos and libraries
- Community centers, public pools, playgrounds, and picnic areas
- Limited-capacity religious services and cultural ceremonies
- Nightclubs
- Concert venues
- Live audience sports
- Festivals
- Theme parks
- Hotels/lodging for leisure and tourism – non-essential travel
- Higher Education

- **Triggers for adjusting modifications.** Please share the county metrics that would serve as triggers for either slowing the pace through Stage 2 or tightening modifications, including the frequency of measurement and the specific actions triggered by metric changes. Please include your plan for how the county will inform the state of emerging concerns and how it will implement early containment measures.

Sierra County MHOAC team has a CD call-down process to ensure that staff can be reached after hours and there will be no delay in the caller receiving an immediate response. Our local clinics are only open M-Th during our business hours but in the event out of county providers or laboratories needed to contact us after hours they would call our main number which directs them to the Sheriff's Office who has our call-down chart.

The Medical Health Operational Area Coordination Team (MHOAC) will daily evaluate and monitor:

- o Local and regional data (cases, hospitalizations, EMS capability) monitored daily. Region III bed polling reviewed daily.
- o Local healthcare facilities will continue to provide weekly situation reports
- o Local and regional testing and trends will be monitored daily
- o Case investigation and contact tracing will be conducted
- o Coroner reports will be reviewed

Should an increase in illness occur, targeted mitigation measures will be employed as determined by the MHOAC Team. This could include one or more of the following:

- o Contact CDPH COVID Hotline which is available 24/7 at (510)255-8922
- o Increased monitoring of exposed contacts
- o Stricter quarantine of contacts
- o Increased recommended use of PPE
- o Recommended reduction in worksite staff
- o Sanitation of a specific facility
- o Closure or partial closure of a specific facility
- o Recommended reduction in social gatherings
- Should the number of positive COVID cases increase to 3 cases, the public will be asked to return to stricter protocols and Stage 2 would be delayed.

- Should no significant increase in cases occur over a period of at least 30 days; then we will consider advancing into Stage 3 ONLY with CDPH approval.

- **Your plan for moving through Stage 2.** Please provide details on your plan for county to move through opening sectors and spaces that are part of the State’s plan for Stage 2. A reminder, that this variance only covers those areas that are part of Stage 2, up to, but not including Stage 3. For additional details on sectors and spaces included in Stage 2, please go to the [California Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Response County variance web page](#)

Please see Sierra County's Phased Reopening Plan for specific details.

COVID-19 Containment Plan

While not mandatory, CDPH strongly recommends that counties requesting a variance to increase the pace through Stage 2 create a county COVID-19 containment plan as noted above. While not exhaustive, the following areas and questions are important to address in any containment plan.

Testing

- Is there a plan to increase testing to the recommended daily capacity of 2 per 1000 residents?
- Is the average percentage of positive tests over the past 7 days <7% and stable or declining?
- Have specimen collection locations been identified that ensure access for all residents?
- Have contracts/relationships been established with specimen processing labs?
- Is there a plan for community surveillance?

Please see the testing capacity response above that answers all these questions.

Contact Tracing

- How many staff are currently trained and available to do contact tracing?
- Are these staff reflective of community racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity?
- Is there a plan to expand contact tracing staff to the recommended levels to accommodate a three-fold increase in COVID-19 cases, presuming that each case has ten close contacts?
- Is there a plan for supportive isolation for low income individuals who may not have a safe way to isolate or who may have significant economic challenges as a result of isolation?

1 certified contact tracer with 2 in training through UCSF now. Yes
Yes – we plan to train 2 more staff as soon as training is available.
Yes –
Please see the containment capacity response above that answers all these questions.

Protecting the Vulnerable

- How many congregate care facilities, of what types, are in the county?
- How many correctional facilities, of what size, are in the county?
- How many homelessness shelters are in the county and what is their capacity?
- What is the COVID-19 case rate at each of these facilities?
- Do facilities have the ability to safely isolate COVID-19 positive individuals?
- Do facilities have the ability to safety quarantine individuals who have been exposed?
- Is there sufficient testing capacity to conduct a thorough outbreak investigation at each of these facilities?
- Do long-term care facilities have sufficient PPE for staff, and do these facilities have access to suppliers for ongoing PPE needs?
- Do these facilities (particularly skilled nursing facilities) have access to staffing agencies if and when staff shortages related to COVID-19 occur?

In Sierra County we have 1 SNF, no correctional facilities, no homeless shelters and no COVID-19 cases at this time. The SNF has a isolate and quarantine plan in place if needed. We feel there is sufficient testing capacity as noted in the testing capacity bullet above. Please see the vulnerable populations response above that answers all these questions.

Vulnerable individuals – those over the age of 65 and individuals with pre-existing health conditions, are encouraged to stay at home. Households with vulnerable members should be aware that other members of the household may increase risk of transmission if resuming normal activities. Precautions should be taken to protect the vulnerable household members.

Acute Care Surge

- Is there daily tracking of hospital capacity including COVID-19 cases, hospital census, ICU census, ventilator availability, staffing and surge capacity?
- Are hospitals relying on county MHOAC for PPE, or are supply chains sufficient?
- Are hospitals testing all patients prior to admission to the hospital?
- Do hospitals have a plan for tracking and addressing occupational exposure?

Please see attached letter from the Tri-county HCC. Hospitals have their own supply chain vendors but also utilize their county MHOAC for additional PPE supplies in the event they cannot order PPE.

Essential Workers

- How many essential workplaces are in the county?
- What guidance have you provided to your essential workplaces to ensure employees and customers are safe in accordance with state/county guidance for modifications?
- Do essential workplaces have access to key supplies like hand sanitizer, disinfectant and cleaning supplies, as well as relevant protective equipment?
- Is there a testing plan for essential workers who are sick or symptomatic?
- Is there a plan for supportive quarantine/isolation for essential workers?

Approximately 40% of our businesses fall into the essential category. Please see the above essential worker response that answers these questions.

Special Considerations

- Are there industries in the county that deserve special consideration in terms of mitigating the risk of COVID-19 transmission, e.g. agriculture or manufacturing?
- Are there industries in the county that make it more feasible for the county to increase the pace through stage 2, e.g. technology companies or other companies that have a high percentage of workers who can telework?

Many of our businesses are small with either no employees or employees who can telecommute. Our 2 childcare facilities have been open since the start of the pandemic with excellent, safe policies in place for cleaning, screening parents at drop off and children multiple times per day, hygiene, distancing, limiting workers and children. They have ramped up efforts to ensure that they can take on more children as parents are able to return to work. They work closely with our local SNCS, OES and the LPC to obtain needed supplies.

Community Engagement

- Has the county engage with its cities?
- Which key county stakeholders should be a part of formulating and implementing the proposed variance plan?
- Have virtual community forums been held to solicit input into the variance plan?
- Is community engagement reflective of the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the community?

Our City Mayor, local OES, Cal-OES representative, Board of Supervisors, Planning and Building Staff, Sheriff's Office participate in EOC calls 3 times a week. In addition we have a Disaster Council meeting once a week with additional partners such as EPHC Hospital PIO, EMS, Fire, School Superintendent.

Relationship to Surrounding Counties

- Are surrounding counties experiencing increasing, decreasing or stable case rates?
- Are surrounding counties also planning to increase the pace through Stage 2 of California's roadmap to modify the Stay-at-Home order, and if so, on what timeline? How are you coordinating with these counties?
- How will increased regional and state travel impact the county's ability to test, isolate, and contact trace?

Our neighboring counties are all applying for the variance as they are also able to attest they meet this criteria. They have already been testing Sierra County residents since the onset. Both Nevada and Plumas have opened their testing up to all HCW's including First Responders. SCPH is working in collaboration with PCPH to initiate a drive-thru once they receive their rapid testing machine and supplies. Therefore we feel confident to move into Stage 2 with all the mitigation measures we have put in place prior to this Reopen.

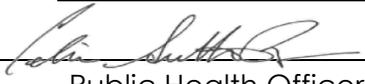
In addition to your county's COVID-19 VARIANCE ATTESTATION FORM, please include:

- Letter of support from the County Board of Supervisors
- Letter of support from the local hospitals or health care systems. In the event that the county does not have a hospital or health care system within its jurisdiction, a letter of support from the relevant regional health system(s) is also acceptable.
- County Plan for moving through Stage 2

All documents should be emailed to Jake Hanson at Jake.Hanson@cdph.ca.gov

I CSP, hereby attest that I am duly authorized to sign and act on behalf of SCPH. I certify that Sierra County Public Health has met the readiness criteria outlined by CDPH designed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and that the information provided is true, accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. If a local COVID-19 Containment Plan is submitted for SCPH, I certify that it was developed with input from the County Board of Supervisors/City Council, hospitals, health systems, and a broad range of stakeholders in the jurisdiction. I acknowledge that I remain responsible for implementing the local COVID-19 Containment Plan and that CDPH, by providing technical guidance, is in no way assuming liability for its contents.

I understand and consent that the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) will post this information on the CDPH website and is public record.

Printed Name Celia Sutton-Pado, MD
Signature 
Position/Title Public Health Officer
Date 5/11/2020