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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Contact:

Kerri S. Mabee  
Public Information Officer  
Riverside University Health System  
P: 951.467.7542 | E: K.Mabee@ruhealth.org

## ***Riverside County Health Officials Urge Residents to Take Precautions Due to Smoke and Ash from Fires***

**RIVERSIDE, CA (September 10, 2024)** – Southern California wildfires are generating smoke and ash that is blanketing the skies over parts of Riverside County, creating unhealthy air quality and prompting health warnings.

Wildfire smoke can cause a range of health issues, which include burning eyes, runny nose, shortness of breath, scratchy throat, headaches and chest pains. Smoke can also worsen chronic heart and lung disease.

“Residents, especially those with chronic health conditions, need to be aware of the risks of breathing unhealthy air and take steps to keep safe,” said Riverside County Public Health Officer Dr. Geoffrey Leung.

People at heightened risk include pregnant women, children, older adults, first responders and those with chronic health conditions such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), diabetes, kidney disease and heart disease.

Active fires are burning in Western Riverside and San Bernardino counties, resulting in evacuations and poor air quality, according to the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD).

People in areas impacted by smoke and ash should avoid strenuous activity, remain indoors with the air-conditioning on and windows and doors closed, Leung said. Indoor air can be kept fresh with a clean filtering system to prevent from bringing smoke inside.

Officials also stress the importance of following evacuation instructions for the safety of all residents living in affected areas. Visit [www.rivcoready.org](http://www.rivcoready.org) for the latest information on the Riverside County fires and sign up for emergency alerts at [www.RivCoReady.org/AlertRivCo](http://www.RivCoReady.org/AlertRivCo).

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### **About Riverside University Health System**

*The 439-bed Riverside University Health System (RUHS) Medical Center in Moreno Valley, Calif., is a teaching hospital and research hub with a Level I Trauma Center and the only Pediatric Intensive Care Unit in Riverside County. RUHS includes 14 Community Health Centers across Riverside County, the Public Health Department, and Behavioral Health, which provides emergency and inpatient psychiatric care. Visit [www.RUHealth.org](http://www.RUHealth.org) to learn more.*