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Media Contact: Jose Arballo Jr
RUHS-Public Health
Office: 951-358-5599 Cell: 951-712-3705
Email: jarballojr@ruhealth.org

Death of infant caused by COVID-19 infection, Riverside County health officials report

An infant from southwest Riverside County recently died after contracting COVID-19, becoming the youngest person in the county to die from the virus since the pandemic started.

The death took place earlier this week at a local hospital where the infant was taken after becoming ill. The name of the child, who was less than 1 year of age, and city of residence are not being released.

“Our thoughts and sympathies go out to the parents, family, and others who are impacted by this tragedy,” said Dr. Geoffrey Leung, public health officer for Riverside County. “This loss reminds us that this virus does not discriminate between the young and old.”

Leung said the death of the child “strengthens our commitment to end this pandemic before the loss of another young life. It shows the importance of using the tools available to protect those around us, particularly the most innocent, from the harm the virus can cause.”

According to health officials, there have been more than 5,600 COVID-19-related deaths in Riverside County since the start of the pandemic. The vast majority of the deaths have involved those over 30 years of age, but there have been a handful of teens and young adults who have died from the virus – some with underlying health issues. It is unclear whether the infant had any underlying health issues.

“It is devastating to learn about the passing of this infant life. Our hearts and thoughts go out to the family,” said Chair Jeff Hewitt, Fifth District Supervisor. “We have a long road ahead of us as we navigate this pandemic and it’s the loss of life that reminds us about the challenges we face.”

The previous youngest death in Riverside County was a 4-year-old child from Western Riverside County who died in August.

Health officials have reported that infants under age 1 might be at higher risk of severe illness with COVID-19 than older children. This is likely due to their immature immune systems and smaller airways, which make them more likely to develop breathing issues with respiratory virus infections.

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