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Riverside County
NEWS RELEASE

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More residents needed for COVID testing to slow the spread and remain in red tier

More Riverside County residents need to be tested for coronavirus to help the county remain in the red tier and help slow the spread of the virus.

Coronavirus tests for active infections slows the spread of the disease by identifying infected individuals who can then be isolated as well as their close contacts. This process disrupts the disease, slows the spread of the disease and preserves space in our acute care hospitals.

In addition, increased testing of those with symptoms and those without symptoms will help the county remain in the red tier, which allowed more businesses as well as schools and places of worship to reopen indoors. Late last month, Riverside County moved from the more restrictive purple to the red tier because it met the criteria for positivity and case rates.

“Riverside County residents have sacrificed so much, and the improved data has reflected that sacrifice. But it is critical that the community continue its wide-spread testing,” said Kim Saruwatari, director of Public Health. “The testing tells us where the virus is spreading, and it also helps us continue our movement forward.”

Based on the state's criteria, increased testing will result in a lower-case rate, allowing the county to remain red tier where the virus spread is considered substantial. Counties are placed within the red tier because of their daily case rate (must be lower than seven new cases per 100,000 population) and positivity rate (lower than eight percent).

The state recently began adjusting the case rate higher for counties that are not meeting the state's daily average testing volume, which brought Riverside County's case rate above seven per 100,000.

"I believe that everyone should get tested," said Riverside County Board Chair and Fourth District Supervisor V. Manuel Perez. "Testing is one of the most crucial ways to slow down the spread of the virus and keep our community healthy. It helps to quickly identify cases and isolate those who are COVID-positive, so they can recover without passing the virus to others. Testing is for everyone, regardless of immigration status, insurance, or whether you have symptoms or not, and there is no charge to the individual."

While Riverside County has the volume to test 4,000 people a day, less than half that number have been getting tested at county and state testing sites in recent weeks. There are also mobile teams that support testing in specific communities, businesses or organizations by testing for one or two days.

Saruwatari said those with and without symptoms are encouraged to get tested, as well as younger people who traditionally have not gotten screened at the same rate as other groups.

Testing is free. There are 12 testing sites spread throughout Riverside County, both walk-in and drive-up services. To find locations and make an appointment, go online to gettested.ruhealth.org. For a list of COVID-19 test sites throughout California, click <https://covid19.ca.gov/get-tested/>

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