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COVID-19 case found in former skilled nursing facility patient

A former patient from a Rancho Mirage skilled nursing home has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) and Riverside County health officials are preparing to test employees and other residents of the 99-bed facility.

The individual is being treated at a medical facility in Coachella Valley and no information about the patient is being released. The individual spent several days in the Rancho Mirage Health and Rehabilitation Center before being transferred to the hospital.

Dr. Cameron Kaiser, Riverside County public health officer, said the department plans to test each patient and employee at the facility as soon as possible. If an individual does test positive, they will be promptly isolated and medically evaluated, and transported safely to a hospital if they are severely ill. The source of the infection is under investigation.

“Quick action is required when we are dealing with a vulnerable population like this,” said Kaiser, who recently declared a public health emergency after officials announced the county’s first COVID-19 case. “By testing immediately, we can learn whether the illness has spread to others and take appropriate action.”

Staci Trang, risk management representative with the facility, offered words of support for the former patient.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with this patient and the family. We wish the patient a full recovery,” Trang said. “Our top priority is the health, well-being and safety of our patients and employees. As such, we are following all CDC precautions and recommendations.”

Riverside County has 12 confirmed cases – 10 in Coachella Valley and two cruise ship passengers who have not returned to the region since being diagnosed. Kaiser has recommended seniors and those with underlying health issues in Coachella Valley limit non-essential travel. One of the Coachella Valley cases is considered “community spread,” meaning health investigators have not determined the source of the infection.

Kaiser on Thursday ordered the cancelation of public gatherings of 250 people or more in Riverside County as a means of slowing the spread of coronavirus and today ordered the closure of county schools through April 3. The order regarding gatherings mirrors recommendations issued Wednesday evening by the California Department of Public Health.

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