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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Since Public Health learned of and notified the community about a positive case of COVID-19 within the county on Friday evening, many questions (and some suggestions) have come in about the process of **contact investigation**.

First, I would like to let you know that I have scheduled time to speak about this with Jim Guidi on KVGC Monday morning at 8:15 a.m. Following is the information I intend to communicate on-air.

The process of contact investigation begins even before a positive test result. Symptomatic persons who present for medical care are evaluated for risk factors for COVID-19, including travel and whether they have been in contact with another person with COVID-19. Symptomatic persons are isolated from the time they are determined to be a suspect case, pending receipt of the test results. This 14-day “look-back” from the date of symptom onset is to help determine where the individual may have become infected. For the case announced on Friday night, we had already determined contact to another confirmed case, had that information in-hand when the positive result came in, and communicated it in the press release.

When individuals test positive, they remain in **isolation**. The next aspect of contact investigation is to determine when they would have become infectious and what other persons may have been exposed and therefore at risk. We develop a list of other persons that spent time in close proximity to the case from the time they developed symptoms until they were placed in isolation. These are called **contacts**. Each contact is notified, interviewed, and given further instructions. Those that are asymptomatic are placed on **quarantine** and observed for symptoms for 14 days after their last contact with the index case. Those that become symptomatic are isolated and evaluated. All contacts are given clear instructions, provided support, and kept out of societal mixing until cleared by the Health Department. Beginning Friday night and throughout the day yesterday, Public Health staff have been tracking down contacts to the positive case.

Quarantine and isolation are the essential **containment** strategies that, along with travel restrictions, have been deployed in the early phase of response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Public Health has been using containment measures on an individual case-by-case basis since the beginning of February. Over the past 10 days, locally and statewide, we have layered on the **mitigation** strategies of first, social distancing, and most recently stay-at-home orders limiting all individuals in our community to being out in society only for essential needs. During this time, it remains vital that people stay emotionally connected to others via non-physical, virtual means like by telephone or online.

Community transmission means persons who test positive are not linked to a known case and did not travel to another area where transmission is occurring. The mitigation measures are more effective than the containment measures in this scenario. It is likely that community transmission could already be occurring in Amador County, which is why it is so important for

everyone to protect themselves and others by complying with the stay-at-home orders. This is the reason that we do not publish a list of venues that an individual may have visited - everyone should be taking the precautions of social distancing and hygiene measures no matter where they may go.

Looking ahead, Public Health is also preparing for the next phase of the COVID-19 response by actively engaging in healthcare surge capacity planning at the local, regional and state levels.

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