



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mono County Health Department

www.monohealth.com/Coronavirus

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MONO COUNTY TO SUBMIT TIER ADJUDICATION REQUEST TO STATE

November 9, 2020 – Mono County Public Health Officials are submitting a request to enter into a tier adjudication process with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). Mono County is seeking consideration for adjudication based on *“qualitative and contextual elements”* arising from positive COVID-19 (Coronavirus) cases directly associated with the U.S. Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center (MCMWTC) in northern Mono County (Pickel Meadows). Over 173 positive cases have been reported to the state by the Marine base since the outbreak was identified on October 21, representing 87% of Mono County COVID-19 cases over this time period.

The Marine base outbreak started with the arrival of over 1,500 Marines for training, some of whom had unrecognized COVID-19. Most of the cases have occurred among these visiting trainees, who are restricted to the remote mountain base. Thirteen cases have occurred among MCMWTC resident personnel, and three among family members. There is no evidence that this military outbreak has resulted in increased infections outside the MCMWTC community; the control measures undertaken by the Marine Corps seem to be working to contain spread.

Mono County Public Health officials discussed the situation with CDPH leadership on Friday, November 6, making the case that movement to a more restrictive tier would not address the primary cause of the surge in county cases, and therefore the adverse economic consequences would be unwarranted. Upon hearing our explanation of the cause of the surge of COVID-19 cases, CDPH officials directed Mono County to submit a request for adjudication. Once a county enters into tier adjudication with CDPH, the county’s tier assignment at the time of the request will be held in the current tier for at least

one week, until adjudication is complete. Therefore, no tier movement will happen this week from our current Tier 3 Moderate (orange) status.

Dr. Tom Boo, Mono County Health Officer stated that, *“Dr. Erica Pan, the acting State Health Officer, and other CDPH officials seemed receptive to our explanation of the situation in Mono County. Upon submission of the adjudication request, the State will formally consider our request that we not move to the most restrictive Purple tier based on the fact that the numerous cases associated with the MCMWTC are almost entirely limited to the base and have had minimal effects on the COVID situation in the civilian community.”*

“As we make this request to try to stay out of the Purple tier, I am increasingly concerned that we are seeing more cases in Mono County that are NOT related to the Marine Corps outbreak. Last week (November 1-7) we had 15 new confirmed cases, mostly in Mammoth Lakes and the surrounding area. This is the most cases we’ve had in a week since July, and exceeds the 14 cases per week that are permitted in our current tier. Another such week and we will probably move to Tier 2 (Red) later this month, regardless of what happens with the adjudication request related to the Marine Base,” commented Dr. Boo.

*“Increased restrictions will cause more economic hardship, adversely affecting many businesses and workers. We urge Mono County residents to hang in there and continue to be very careful, especially with indoor activities: keep distancing, masking, and cleaning hands. I would further ask our community to be really conservative about social gatherings. Remember that gatherings of up to 12 people from a maximum of 3 households are only permitted **outdoors** with modifications. Obviously, it is getting cold now, so if its not possible to gather outdoors please consider not gathering at all until things are better. Please also be really diligent about not going to work or being around other people if you are ill,”* implored Dr. Boo.

Mono County should have a decision from the state on our adjudication request related to the MCMWTC-related cases by Tuesday, November 17. CDPH will post our adjudication request and a summary of the final decision on the CDPH website after the county tier adjudication request package and discussion between State and local officials have been completed (<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/COVID-19-County-Tier->

[Adjudication-Request.aspx](#)). Again, no tier movement will occur this week from our current Tier 3 Moderate (orange) status.

All Mono County residents and visitors are asked to do their part to **#StaySafeToStayOpen**. This is more than a hashtag – it needs to become a way of life.

Additional information regarding the Blueprint for a Safer Economy is available online: <https://covid19.ca.gov/roadmap-counties/> or by visiting the Mono County COVID-19 Portal in English: **MonoHealth.com/Coronavirus** or Spanish: <https://monohealth.com/coronavirus-es>.

Cover. Distance. Wash and **#StaySafeToStayOpen!**

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