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Riverside County health officials announce first locally acquired case of COVID-19

Riverside University Health System – Public Health has announced today the first case of locally acquired COVID-19, more commonly known as novel coronavirus.

The individual, who is not being identified because of confidentiality rules, tested positive for COVID-19 and is currently undergoing care at Eisenhower Health in Rancho Mirage. Public Health is following up on people who may have been exposed and an investigation is in progress to determine how the individual contracted COVID-19.

This is the second case overall recorded in Riverside County; a former cruise ship passenger from Riverside County was diagnosed with COVID-19 recently and is recovering at a Northern

California medical facility. That individual has not returned to Riverside County since leaving the cruise ship.

“We have always known this was a possibility,” Kaiser said of the first locally acquired case. “We have been planning for weeks and are prepared to take the necessary steps to protect the health of our local community.”

Lee Rice, public information officer for Eisenhower, said: “Eisenhower Health is currently treating a patient who is considered a presumptive positive for coronavirus after testing by Riverside County Public Health. The patient is in isolation and Eisenhower staff have taken appropriate precautions in the treatment of this patient. No further information about the patient will be provided at this time.

“We ask the community to remember that Eisenhower’s medical professionals treat patients with infectious diseases every day and are prepared to care for our community members. Eisenhower continues to work closely with Riverside County Public Health, California Department of Public Health and within CDC guidelines.”

Earlier this week, Riverside County officials activated a medical health department operations center to better coordinate public messaging and planning among community partners as Riverside County officials prepare for the spread of the illness.

“We are trained and prepared to respond to these situations. We have been in communication with hospitals and healthcare providers in Riverside County and have provided them with the information and resources they need. Protecting the health of Riverside County remains our top priority,” said Kim Saruwatari, public health director.

Updated Riverside County information about COVID-19 is available at www.rivcoph.org/coronavirus. The public is encouraged to call 2-1-1 and 800 – CDC – INFO (800 – 232 – 4636) with any questions.

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