

The governor ought to beg our forgiveness if this guy starts a pandemic in the county.

How many people did he contact and in what stores? Why isn't the county letting residents know if they are at risk?

Now we better double down on isolation. In two weeks we may see an explosion of cases here, all because of **a policy that protects the guilty at the expense of the innocent**

From: announce-bounces@lists.mcn.org <announce-bounces@lists.mcn.org>
on behalf of Jack Bush <jack@crcmendocino.org>
Sent: Saturday, April 18, 2020 6:01 PM
To: announce@lists.mcn.org; Ted Williams
Subject: [MCN-Announce]- Article by The Mendocino Voice regarding
Mendocino County's 5th positive Coronavirus test

Mendocino County confirms 5th case of COVID-19 in recent parolee

By Kate B. Maxwell <<https://mendovoice.com/author/katemaxwell/>> |
April 17, 2020

MENDOCINO Co., 4/17/20 – A fifth confirmed case of COVID-19 in Mendocino County was announced this afternoon. The infected person is a man between the ages of 19 and 35, who has recently been released early from state prison in Chino, where he had come into contact with a confirmed case of the virus on April 7. The man is reportedly asymptomatic and is now isolated at the home of a relative, but is believed to have been in the Ukiah area for the last six or seven days. The announcement was made in a video posted to social media by Mendocino County Public Health Officer Dr. Noemi Doohan and other county officials this afternoon (watch here <https://www.facebook.com/mendocinocounty/videos/917221238692081/>>).

County officials were first informed of the situation yesterday by out-of-county officials, as the man had been expected to report to his parole officer in Stanislaus County. Law enforcement in Mendocino County was informed, and Mendocino Public Health provided a COVID-19 test to get back results as soon as possible. The man's test result was confirmed positive today.

The man, who is the county's fifth case, and currently the only known active case of Covid-19, was recently released early from the California Institute for Men (colloquially referred to as just "Chino") in San Bernardino County due to policies around early release due the coronavirus, and according to Mendocino County Sheriff Matthew Kendall, is "not a Ukiah resident," but had travelled to this county instead of reporting to authorities in Stanislaus County.

The man had been scheduled for parole on May 7, and initially was put into a quarantine on April 7, but was then released from prison on

April 8. He is believed to have been in the Ukiah area for six or seven days as of today, and Kendall did not know how exactly he had travelled from Chino to Ukiah. Doohan stated that initial contact tracing of who the man might have come into contact with had begun on Friday, and so far looks "very reassuring," adding that he has stayed quarantined, and is now in isolation. Officials clarified in a later statement the man had not been tested prior to his release.

In in a subsequent interview this afternoon with The Mendocino Voice, officials stated he had twice visited stores in Ukiah would not provide additional details.

As of the most recent numbers available, Mendocino County had conducted 492 tests, with four confirmed cases that are considered recovered, and this most recent case as the only active case, and 14 tests pending. Doohan praised the coordination of the local agencies and community clinic staff for acting quickly and in cooperation once they became aware someone with a known contact needed testing. Doohan added that a press release was expected "within two hours" during the 3 p.m. video announcement.

During epidemics prisons and jails can act as reservoirs and vectors of disease. As such, many countries have done large releases of prisoners during this pandemic, and so following the advice of epidemiologists, Governor Gavin Newsom has ordered some <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/03/24/governor-newsom-issues-executive-order-on-state-prisons-and-juvenile-facilities-in-response-to-the-covid-19-outbreak/> prisoners to be released early and other changes to the prison system during the pandemic including reducing new intakes. Still, the number of reported cases of the virus among prisoners continues to increase <https://calmatters.org/california-divide/2020/04/californias-inmates-are-at-high-risk-coronavirus/>. The state and civil rights advocates have recently been fighting in court over the possibility of additional inmate releases <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-04-17/judge-rejects-more-inmates-releases-from-california-prisons-says-state-not-indifferent-to-covid-19>.

Kendall said he had "some extreme concerns" about the way the situation had unfolded and the state's system of early release had been implemented. He said he had been informed of the situation by the Stanislaus County sheriff yesterday afternoon, on April 16, who told him a prisoner had been released from Chino and had been ordered to check in with a parole officer in Stanislaus County, but had instead traveled to Ukiah and called authorities from there.

Kendall stated that he subsequently learned that staff at Chino had sent a memo to Stanislaus County officials on April 9, warning that the inmate had known contact with a person infected with COVID-19, and had been placed on a quarantine on April 7 – a status that should have lasted until April 21.

Instead, the man was instead released the next day, on April 8. Kendall said that after getting the news he immediately notified Ukiah Chief of Police Justin Wyatt and Dr. Doohan in order to secure a test quickly, and positive results were confirmed today. The man has been asymptomatic and remains in quarantine.

Kendall especially expressed concern that only Stanislaus County, and not Mendocino County officials, had been notified of the potential contact with a confirmed case, saying in the video, "Turning people loose at the door and saying go about your way is like throwing sparks into dry grass."

Although the man may have ultimately arrived in Mendocino County, local officials stated they hoped some of the problems with this situation would inform the process statewide moving forward, and Kendall said he had shared concerns with Ralph Diaz, California Secretary of State Prisons.

"My concern is how many times has it occurred? We know of one issue here at this point, however, what does the rest of the state look like right now?" said Kendall.

Wyatt expressed similar concerns about the process and timing of the inmate's release, and commended the other agencies within the county for acting in coordination quickly. He added that local officials had made numerous inquiries on a state level as what went wrong.

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