



Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency

Healthy People, Healthy Communities

Tammy Moss Chandler, Director

Andrew Coren, M.D. County Health Officer



DECLARATION OF LOCAL HEALTH EMERGENCY

(Health & Safety Code §101080)

WHEREAS, Health and Safety Code section 101080 authorizes a local health officer to declare a local health emergency in the health officer's jurisdiction, or any part thereof, whenever the health officer reasonably determines that there is an imminent and proximate threat of the introduction of any contagious, infectious, or communicable disease, chemical agent, noncommunicable biologic agent, toxin, or radioactive agent; and

WHEREAS, the August Complex Fire, which includes 37 fires, emerged on August 17, 2020, burned over 470,000 acres and currently at 24% containment; and

WHEREAS, the Oak Fire emerged on September 7, 2020, burned over 860 acres, destroyed multiple structures, currently at 25% containment, threatening over 800 residential structures, and leaving over 4,000 residents are under mandatory evacuation; and

WHEREAS, the Hopkins Fire has burned over 15,000 acres and merged with the Elkhorn, Vinegar Peak and Willow Basin Fires.

WHEREAS, the potential for toxic exposures and threats to public health and the environment exists in the aftermath of a major wildfire disaster, and debris and ash from residential structure fires contain hazardous substances that can result in adverse health impacts to the public; and

WHEREAS, exposure to hazardous substances may lead to acute and chronic health effects and may cause long-term public health and environmental impacts; uncontrolled hazardous substances and debris pose significant threats to public health through inhalation of dust particles and contamination of drinking water supplies; and improper handling can expose workers to toxic materials, and improper transport and disposal of fire debris can spread hazardous substances throughout the community; and

WHEREAS, the Health Officer finds that the wildfires from the September 2020 Fires have created an imminent threat to public health in Mendocino County in the form of severely compromised air quality, potential risk to drinking water supply, and potential for contaminated debris from household hazardous waste and materials and structural debris resulting from the potential destruction of structures; and

WHEREAS, fire, smoke, and extreme heat is causing risk to the public's health, especially vulnerable people, who have medical conditions (such as asthma, COPD, cardiac disease), are elderly/frail, and those who are homeless and do not have indoor shelter; and

WHEREAS, this declaration enables the County to more effectively respond to an imminent outbreak, seek and utilize mutual aid, potentially obtain reimbursement, and ensure that the

County's public health professionals and providers have all necessary personal protective equipment to provide quality care and keep our community safe; and

WHEREAS, this declaration must be ratified by the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors within seven (7) days; and

Now, therefore, pursuant to Health & Safety Code section 101080, the Mendocino County Health Officer declares:

1) The potential introduction hazardous air quality from smoke, disruption of serpentine soils, and mercury mines create exposure to harmful toxins and particulates in Mendocino County is an imminent threat to the public health within the meaning of Health & Safety Code section 101080.

2) A local health emergency is declared in Mendocino County commencing on or about 12:50 pm of the 10th day of September 10, 2020.

WHEREAS, the local health emergency shall not remain in effect after seven days from the date of this declaration unless it has been ratified by the County of Mendocino's Board of Supervisors.

Date: 9/10/20

Time: 12:50 pm

Issued by: Howard Andrew Coren, MD

Howard Andrew Coren, MD
Public Health Officer