



**For immediate release
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Statewide computer glitch means undercounting of COVID-19 cases

Problems began sometime in July – likely some positive cases never contacted

MARSYVILLE, CA – A statewide electronic system used to relay COVID-19 lab results to local public health departments stopped working properly sometime in late July, causing an undercounting of cases. Yuba-Sutter Health Officer Dr. Phuong Luu said more concerning than the undercount is that counties did not receive crucial information needed to contact those who tested positive.

In the coming days, counties throughout the state expect to see a brief period in which case counts significantly increase, as they begin receiving the backlog of both positive and negative lab results. It is still unclear when the electronic reporting issues began and how many Yuba-Sutter test results were involved.

“The timely and accurate reporting of lab results is crucial to the work our Public Health team does to contact positive cases, advise them to quarantine and work with them to find others who may have been exposed,” Dr. Luu said. “I expect our Tracer and Investigation team to be hit with a glut of lab results soon, which they will have to carefully work through.”

California officials say that until they get the undercounted lab results to the local health departments, counties will not be added to or taken off the state Monitoring List.

“We saw numbers begin to come down over the past couple of weeks, but sadly a portion of that trend may have been the result of unreported lab results,” Dr. Luu said.

Many state labs use a system called Electronic Lab Reporting (ELR) to send results to the California Reportable Disease Information Exchange (CalREDIE), which in turn relays the information to counties. The California Department of Public Health contacted county public health officials late Monday evening to advise them that ELR began having issues communicating with CalREDIE at some point in late July. State officials say they are still trying to determine when the reporting issues began and how many positive and negative cases did not reach county health departments.

“We are working with the state to reset the process and find the best way to get lab results directly to the counties without going through the faulty state reporting system,” Dr. Luu said. “I hope our Yuba-Sutter community will bear with us as we figure out how this statewide glitch affected us locally.”

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