

# NEWS RELEASE



**Chief Administrative Office  
El Dorado County**

## **COUNTY RELEASES GRAPH SHOWING RISE OF COVID-19 CASES IN SOUTH LAKE TAHOE REGION**

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**(PLACERVILLE, CA)** – After a steady increase in confirmed cases over the last few weeks and an influx of visitors to the South Lake Tahoe region over the Independence Day weekend, Public Health Officer Dr. Nancy Williams is taking a closer look at that region’s COVID-19 case rate in relation to Governor Newsom’s criteria for placing counties on a watch list which mandates they resume more restrictive measures for businesses and the public in those areas.

“Case counts in South Lake Tahoe have been disproportionately high since we started to track COVID-19 in March, having accounted for about 50 percent of the county's cases to date, but representing only 17 percent of the County's population,” Williams said.

“What is new is that on June 29<sup>th</sup>, the case rates over the prior 14-day period exceeded a 100 positive case count per 100,000 population for the first time. By Sunday, July 5, there had been so many new cases in the South Lake Tahoe region that the rate had risen to 169 per 100,000, far exceeding one of the Governor’s criteria for requiring the roll back of some of the allowances we’ve worked hard to attain,” she said when releasing a Tahoe-region specific case graph with data through July 5<sup>th</sup>.

Governor Newsom announced last month that three categories of criteria are now being applied to determine whether or when a County will be required to reinstate closures and previous restrictions on businesses and the public. These are measures of disease transmission (recent case rates and percentages of tests performed that are positive), increases in rates of severe disease (hospitalizations), and indications of limited hospital capacity (ICU bed and ventilator availability).

One of these measures is the rate of new cases across the county that occurred in the most recent 14-day period. The specific value equals the total number of new cases reported over a 14-day period, divided by the number of people living in the county and then multiplied by 100,000. As long as that value stays under 100, the State is not concerned about case counts growing too fast. However, after it exceeds 100 for three consecutive days, the State will engage with County leaders to offer assistance with addressing the increase in COVID-19 cases. If a downward trend isn’t evident quickly, the State is requiring counties where COVID-19 measures are exceeding thresholds to issue orders to reinstitute certain restrictions, according to Williams. As a county, El Dorado’s numbers for each of the measures still fall below their respective thresholds.

“However, if we were to treat the South Lake Tahoe region (which includes incorporated and unincorporated South Lake Tahoe,Tahoma, Meyers, and several tiny nearby communities) as if it were a county, it would now be added to the State’s monitoring list and asked to curtail certain activities,” said Williams.

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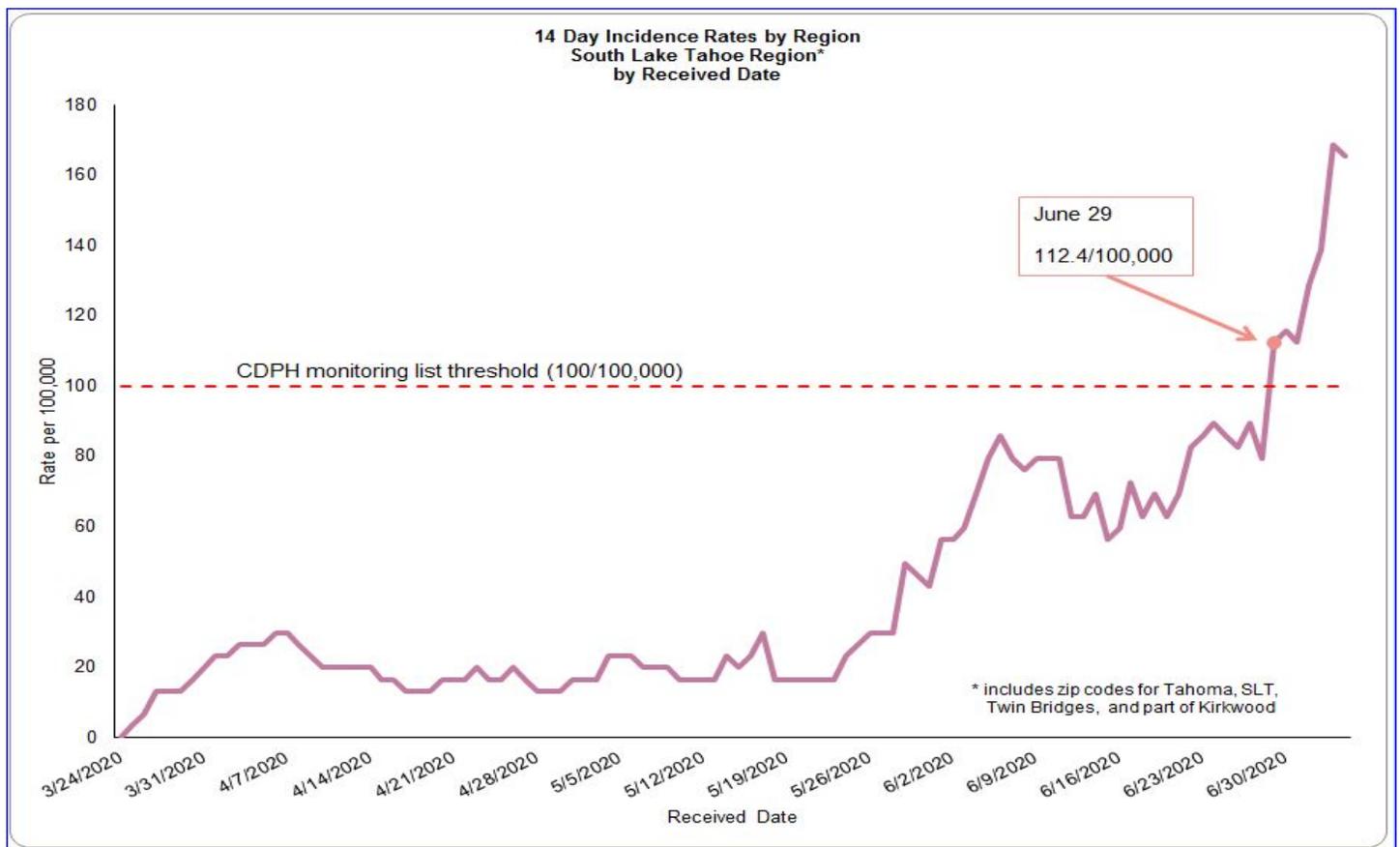
“By our calculations, the number had crossed the 100 threshold and cases are being reported in such great numbers that within a few days it had exceeded the threshold by 70%,” Williams said. “To remain below the threshold rate for new cases, the region can only get about 2 cases per day on average, but we’re seeing four or five times that many now.”

“Unfortunately, countywide numbers are trending upward quickly, too, and we may find ourselves being directed by the State to roll back activities throughout the County,” Williams added.

Many people, both residents and tourists, have been taking precautions, including following the masking and physical distancing mandates needed to slow the spread of the virus since the face-covering guidelines were issued by the State on June 18<sup>th</sup>. However, as evidenced over the recent holiday weekend, too many others are still taking unnecessary risks. That causes great concern in a tourism-based and tourism-dependent destination like Lake Tahoe that counts on keeping its businesses open during the busy summer months.

“There are plenty of ways to safely enjoy all the natural beauty El Dorado County offers whether it be hiking, boating, camping, climbing, or going to the beach,” said Williams. “It’s easy: stay with members of your own household, choose take-out over dine-in meals, wear a mask where required, spend your time outdoors instead of in closed buildings where the risk of transmission is highest, stay at least six feet from others who are not household members, and wash your hands. These are simple steps one can take no matter where they are in the Lake Tahoe region,” she added.

“By actively trying to prevent the spread of COVID-19, you can make the difference between Lake Tahoe being able to keep businesses open for you to enjoy and having the State require us to bring back more stringent restrictions,” Williams noted.



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