



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

PRESS RELEASE

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SALVATION ARMY SHELTER TEMPORARILY CLOSED

Last week, the Santa Cruz County Public Health Division and Human Services Shelter and Care Task Force were notified that a resident of the Salvation Army Shelter in Watsonville tested positive for COVID-19 during preparation for an unrelated medical procedure.

As a result, the Communicable Disease Unit immediately conducted testing of residents and staff at the shelter site. Seven additional residents and staff tested positive for COVID-19. All individuals are asymptomatic and have been referred to the Homeless Persons Health Project for support.

Operations at the Salvation Army Shelter site in Watsonville have been temporarily suspended, and shelter residents have been relocated to support isolation. Following the isolation period and a thorough site cleaning, operations of the shelter are expected to resume.

The Public Health Division and Shelter and Care Task Force wish to thank shelter residents and Salvation Army staff for their cooperation in investigating and addressing this occurrence. Since March, the Task Force has worked to minimize COVID-19 impacts to persons experiencing homelessness by providing shelter to more than 500 persons, and through dedicated outreach to give homeless persons the information and support necessary to protect themselves and their loved ones.

The County seeks to remind residents that asymptomatic spread of COVID-19 may occur, and that individuals should take measures to protect themselves, including avoiding large gatherings, wearing a face covering when engaging with others outside your household, maintaining six feet of physical distancing and washing your hands frequently with soap and water.

For more information on COVID-19 response in the homeless community, please visit www.homelessactionpartnership.org. For local information on COVID-19, go to www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus, call 211 or text "COVID19" to 211211. Residents may also call (831) 454-4242 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.