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*** JOINT STATEMENT***

County of Marin Joint Statement Against Discrimination in COVID-19 Response

The spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has been declared a global health emergency and a national health emergency in the United States. This is a serious and rapidly developing situation, affecting thousands of people worldwide. As the virus spreads beyond its origins in Wuhan, China, we must model a balanced, proactive and informed response.

In Marin County, a person's risk for the illness is based mainly on where they, or someone they have had close contact with, have travelled. There is no racial, ethnic or cultural basis for the disease. Yet, we know that bias is already surfacing. Members of the Asian community, especially the Chinese community, have been subjected to discrimination and exclusion, in Asia, Europe, Australia and the United States.

News media are reporting from around the world stories of hostility and discrimination toward Chinese customers and students, and insults hurled in person and on social media. This is unacceptable and harmful. This is a common and unfortunate societal response to epidemics, and we must do better.

We know that racial, ethnic and cultural discrimination cause bad health outcomes. In the case of an emerging illness, stigma about the illness makes people less likely to come forward, to seek help or ask questions. That makes it harder to fight the disease and protect community health.

Public health authorities at the local, state and federal level are taking action to protect our community. Currently, the best way to prevent the spread of disease is to practice consistent hand washing, cough or sneeze into your sleeve, stay home if you are sick, and get a flu shot. Most masks do not

effectively prevent against infection, but if you are sick, wearing a mask can help keep you from infecting others.

Let's come together with compassion and unity during this stressful time. It's good for our health.

More information:

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[California Department of Public Health](#)

[Marin HHS](#)