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Riverside County  
**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **First COVID-19 deaths reported in Riverside County**

*Public Health Officer also orders social gatherings canceled of 10 or more*

Public Health Officer Dr. Cameron Kaiser today announced the first two deaths associated with coronavirus (COVID-19). Both deaths occurred among patients in the Coachella Valley.

“Our thoughts are with the families of the two patients,” said Kaiser. “Sadly, these outcomes are expected as we face a serious challenge and continue to make the necessary decisions to protect the health of the community.”

In addition, Kaiser today revised his previous order restricting public gatherings from 250 people or greater to no more than 10.

Kaiser’s new health order restricts mass gatherings of 10 people or more, and orders that gatherings with fewer than 10 people must have enough available room to maintain six feet of space between attendees. This is known as social distancing. There are limited exemptions to the 10-person rule, including healthcare facilities, grocery stores, daycare centers and restaurants serving take-out.

“My condolences and prayers are with the families who lost loved ones,” said Riverside County Board Chair and Fourth District Supervisor V. Manuel Perez. “More so now than ever before, we must practice social distancing to flatten the curve. We will be consistently working for the benefit of our communities in these tough times that are before us.”

Kaiser has also ordered the closure of all Riverside County schools from elementary to college. He also has recommended that senior citizens and those with underlying health conditions in the Coachella Valley avoid any non-essential travel. The orders have impacted religious services, weddings, sporting events and classrooms countywide.

Riverside County officials have expanded testing and the county’s public health lab is now operational, meaning local officials will not have to send testing samples to the state lab in Northern California or neighboring San Bernardino County.

“Unfortunately, the number of cases are going to keep going up for awhile,” Kaiser said. “But we’re taking steps to keep us ahead of the curve and getting people taken care of as quickly as we can. If everyone does their part we’ll get through this together.”

Residents are urged to visit [www.rivcoph.org/coronavirus](http://www.rivcoph.org/coronavirus) for updated information. They can also find information on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/countyriver-sidedepartmentofpublichealth>) and on Twitter @rivcodoc.

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