

health of the county,” Almaguer said. “We stand ready. I don’t think we’ll be surprised if we do see a confirmed case [of novel coronavirus] at some point; in the same breath, we may be successful and not receive a returning traveler at a high risk level.”

Should BCPH receive report of a Covid-19 case, the department has protocols in place for monitoring and, if necessary, quarantining the patient.

“People are concerned, and they have a right to be concerned,” Almaguer added. “It’s new, and we don’t know everything about it.”

Mystery and conspiracies have surrounded the cause of this novel coronavirus in China. An international group of public health scientists published a statement in the Lancet medical journal last Wednesday (Feb. 19) refuting “rumours and misinformation about its origins.” U.S. Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) was among the most public promoters of a connection between the outbreak and a lab—the Wuhan Institute of Virology—where

Resources:

Visit buttecounty.net/ph for Butte County Public Health information on coronavirus and influenza, and cdc.gov for updates from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

researchers study coronaviruses in bats.

Still, despite the furor, Covid-19 is not the biggest local woe. In addition to citing flu, Bishop pointed to sepsis as more significant.

Bacterial sepsis—a life-threatening reaction to an existing infection, in this instance from a bacteria—“is often forgotten and underreported,” he said. Ill patients who spike fevers and suffer decreases in blood pressure and consciousness also could have sepsis.

“As far as Butte County goes, coronavirus is way down the list of risks right now,” Bishop added. “It’s not to say we can’t have an epidemic; I suppose the potential is there if we allow it to get established, get going, get spreading sideways in the population. That would be bad news.” □

WEEKLY DOSE



Flu shots boosted

According to the U.S. Influenza Vaccine Effectiveness Network, this season’s influenza vaccine has been 45 percent effective at preventing the illness. A late-season surge of sick patients last year brought the effectiveness of that vaccine down to 29 percent, according to the network, which is part of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While both Influenza A and Influenza B have been detected, the B “Victoria” strain has been the most widely circulating. Since there are still a couple of months left in this flu season, play it safe and get a shot and buoy your resistance.

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