

Rural counties struggle to offer ample access to psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers. California has a shortage of these practitioners, along with counterparts in medical health. Coronavirus has thinned his corps further, Kennelly said, by forcing some service providers to step back for medical reasons or family needs.

From his perspective, the pandemic represents the fourth county emergency since 2017: Along with the spillway crisis in February of that year, Kennelly counts the Wall Fire in Bangor that fall, followed by the Camp Fire and COVID-19.

"I have a lot of staff who have been on the front lines working in every one of those disasters, and it's wearing on them," he said. "A lot of stress."

"We're trying to make sure there's resources for our workforce to remain resilient and get the support *they need*."

Other officials expressed the same concern.

"It's trying," Orme said, "when you're continually in a state of recovery and then immediately back in a state of emergency."

Material needs continue to grow, too. Local communities recovering and rebuilding from the Camp Fire must deal with a concurrent predicament that takes money from the same overtaxed pool. Enloe lost \$30 million in the four months it stayed on standby for a coronavirus surge and will need to ramp up fundraising—from donors already giving elsewhere and now impacted by the economic slowdown—for its needs.

"We need to be cognizant of the impact this is having on the community," Wiltermood said, referencing psychological as well as financial stresses. "But I can't imagine a community that would respond better to a challenge like this; I really can't."

Still, citizens have started to fray. Public

A community-led donation center was set up in the Walmart parking lot immediately after the Camp Fire.

CN&R FILE PHOTO BY MEREDITH J. COOPER



Danette York, director of Butte County Public Health.
CN&R FILE PHOTO COURTESY OF BUTTE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

Health and the city found widespread acceptance of preventative measures during the early days of the pandemic. Lately, however, resistance has developed even as the number of cases spiked.

"The biggest thing you're going to see over the next couple months is how [government officials] reengage the community," Orme said. "The shift of COVID-19 and the pressures it's placed ... have created a devolution—we've gone backwards."

Thoma, fittingly, remains optimistic. Despite adverse conditions, the chamber has added two-dozen members since the start of the pandemic to reach 600. While state restrictions have forced some businesses to close their doors, others have retooled, such as Fifth Sun with face masks and Almendra Winery & Distillery manufacturing hand sanitizer.

"I believe resiliency is what's going to sustain us and keep us moving forward," she said. "We have good people here." □



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