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Riverside County
NEWS RELEASE

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Riverside County to begin coronavirus antibody testing as part of prevalence study

Thousands of Riverside County residents will soon be contacted and asked to take part in a coronavirus antibody testing study being sponsored by county health officials.

About 3,500 randomly selected county residents will be asked if they are interested in taking part in the study, which could determine whether they have been exposed and developed COVID-19 antibodies. The study will help determine the Riverside County prevalence of COVID-19, which will be used to inform planning efforts. Potential participants will be contacted by telephone or email starting later this week.

“We are asking those who are contacted to strongly consider taking part in the study,” said Kim Saruwatari, director of Riverside County Public Health. “It’s important to know the extent of the spread of the virus have developed antibodies. That information is vital as we move forward.”

Residents cannot volunteer for the study, in part, because health officials want a more representative sampling of the community. Antibodies are part of the body’s defense against infections, develop and stay in the blood even after the infection is over. Public Health is not creating the list of participants and will not collect the individual information from the study.

As a reminder, the medical community does not yet know the extent of the benefits of testing positive for coronavirus antibodies. For example, it is not yet known if someone can contract the virus again after testing positive for antibodies. Conducting this study will provide valuable information as COVID-19 continues to be researched.

“Public health officials around the world continue to learn about coronavirus and this antibody study could enhance our local understanding of this disease,” said Riverside County Board Chair and Fourth District Supervisor V. Manuel Perez. “It is important that Riverside County residents get the regular test for coronavirus to protect their families, coworkers and communities, and, if contacted, to participate in an antibody study as well to help our research efforts.”

Those who are selected will complete a survey, then have blood drawn at one of nine sites located throughout the county. These sites are not the same locations where coronavirus testing for active infections is taking place.

For more information about the antibody testing www.rivcoph.org/antibodystudy.

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