

Hello North Lake Tahoe,

I wanted to reach out to you in these difficult times to explain why it's so important that everyone shelter in place – and why now is not the best time to stay at your Tahoe home if you have another primary residence.

This time in our county, country and world is unprecedented. We are being asked to change everything in our everyday lives - from how we work, to how our kids learn, to how we shop. It is challenging but essential that we heed the call to stay at home except for essential needs. We need to be united in our fight against our common enemy: COVID-19.

Please recognize that Tahoe, as a small community, has very limited hospital capacity; Tahoe Forest Hospital serves at least four counties. There are confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the Tahoe region and evidence of community spread, so any impression that there is a 'safe' haven from virus transmission is false. Wherever you reside, leaving your home for any non-essential purpose is prohibited, and could contribute to the spread of illness that may overwhelm local health systems. Further, our local stores are struggling to keep stocked on basic needs and produce. Our pharmacies are also at risk of being overwhelmed. Keep in mind what some may anticipate would be a short trip to Tahoe could turn into a longer trip due to weather, further stretching local resources.

The bottom line: If you live here in Tahoe, it's important to stay home except for essential activities like getting groceries or medication. If you typically reside elsewhere and decide to come to Tahoe rather than sheltering at your primary residence, you risk facing more limited access to care should you become ill.

We have already taken other steps to limit the number of visitors to the Tahoe region, such as stressing that [commercial operation of short-term rentals is prohibited](#) for leisure purposes at this time. But it hasn't been enough. We are still witnessing people not sheltering in place, as well as a steady stream of people into the Tahoe region that place a significant burden on this community. We are strongly encouraging individuals to familiarize themselves with [the Governor's Executive Order and my Health Officer directive](#), intended to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Placer County.

I am hoping you'll take this warning seriously and shelter at your primary residence to help ensure that our health systems can continue to meet the growing needs of our local communities in the coming weeks.

Thank you,

Aimee Sisson, MD, MPH
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Placer County