

County of Riverside (Urban County)

Category: Disaster/Emergency Response & Management

Overview: *Cover Your Face*: Using the joint information system to gain public confidence and change behaviors to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Challenge: In March, local models for COVID-19 cases projected that all intensive care units in Riverside County would be filled by April 23 and all ventilators in use by April 26. These models were based on assumptions if residents did not take the necessary steps to slow and prevent the spread. At the beginning of the pandemic, the non-pharmaceutical interventions recommended by public health and the rest of the medical community did not include wearing face coverings. Riverside County was one of the first counties in California – and the country – to recommend that residents cover their face to slow the spread. This was both a challenge and a strength. While other counties and the state eventually followed, being the first county to recommend wearing face masks meant that the community had to be convinced that doing so would help slow the spread and flatten the curve.

Solution: Using a joint information system approach, the county combined public information practitioners from several departments, led by the executive office and public health department, to educate residents about the novel disease, the county's response to contain the virus and treat patients – as well as the steps for residents to take to prevent the spread. The county developed a multi-faceted campaign focused on three things everyone must do to protect themselves and their loved ones. The joint information system used earned media, paid media, as well as county platforms for social media to disseminate actionable and compelling communications. Tactics included daily news releases, media interviews, videos, public service announcements and social media livestreams. In addition, weekly news conferences or virtual roundtables provided a platform for county subject matter experts to speak directly with our residents.

Innovation: The campaign started in March 2020 using the slogan: *Stay in Place, Maintain Your Space and Cover Your Face*. In June and July 2020, the campaign expanded to include the *Three Simple Steps* and *Masks are Medicine* slogans, respectively. In the never-ending environment of the coronavirus

pandemic, the joint information system rolled out new communication tactics to combat message fatigue and slipping behavior change. All of these messages highlighted the same call to action for our residents.

Results: The three protective actions were widely adopted throughout Riverside County and the state, as evidenced by residents wearing or businesses requiring the mask. As more community members saw and heard a focused, reinforced message to take the necessary steps to prevent the spread of the disease, Riverside County saw a dramatic slowing of the disease with a reduced number of cases, as well as a reduced number of hospitalizations in April and May. At the start of the campaign, the doubling time was seven days in mid-March. This was lengthened to 39 days by the beginning of May. This decreased trend strongly correlates with the timing of our campaign tactics. As cases eventually rose again in June and July, the joint information system created the *Three Simple Steps* and *Masks are Medicine* messages to again focus residents on wearing face coverings to slow the spread. The number of cases and hospitalizations again significantly decreased throughout August 2020.

Replicability: The joint information system approach, the communications strategy and dissemination tactics can be easily replicated among any California county. Most urban counties have several experienced public information practitioners housed in different county departments to support the joint information system. Using in-house resources, the foundational creative assets of the program were developed in-house, with existing equipment and by an existing team of county public information practitioners. The only costs were the placement of the advertisements and the use of the American Sign Language interpreter during livestreams and news conferences. The non-pharmaceutical intervention of wearing a face covering has already been replicated by several cities, counties and the State of California. The communications slogans used by the County of Riverside can also be easily adopted within other jurisdictions.

Program Contact: Brooke Federico, Riverside County Public Information Officer, (951) 955-1130, bcfederico@rivco.org.

County of Riverside (Urban County)
Category: Disaster/Emergency Response & Management

Logo created:





**Riverside
University**
HEALTH SYSTEM
Public Health

March 31, 2020

Riverside County
NEWS RELEASE

Contacts:

Jose Arballo Jr.
Senior Public Information Specialist
(951) 712-3705
jarballojr@ruhealth.org

Brooke Federico
Riverside County Public Information Officer
(951) 743-0075
bcfederico@rivco.org

New public health recommendation to cover the face

Riverside County health officials are recommending residents cover their nose and mouth when leaving home for essential travel to doctor appointments, grocery shopping or pharmacy visits.

The face coverings do not have to be hospital grade but need to cover the nose and mouth. For example, bandanas, fabric masks and neck gaiters are acceptable. Fabric covers and bandanas can be washed and used again.

Up until now, local officials have not recommended the large-scale use of face coverings, but circumstances have changed.

“When the situation changes, the rulebook changes,” said Dr. Cameron Kaiser, Riverside County public health officer. “We’re seeing our numbers increasing even sooner than we predicted and that means our strategy must change too. Covering your face doesn’t change the orders everyone must abide by to stay home as much as possible and maintain social distancing, but it’s an extra layer of protection that I think we need to add.”

The rationale for covering one’s face comes from the belief that transmission occurs primarily through droplets from an infected individual, which fabrics can easily filter. This not only helps to reduce the risk a well person can breathe those droplets in, but also protects others around someone with mild symptoms who may not yet realize they have the illness. Face covering should be worn anytime a person is outside of their home, even in offices of essential businesses.

“The numbers don’t lie and we know that coronavirus is spreading and growing. However, these numbers are actual people and protecting the lives of people is all of our responsibility,” said Board Chair V. Manuel Perez, Fourth District Supervisor. “That means that flattening the curve requires another layer of aggressive protection against the virus. Please take the additional steps to cover your face.”

Health officials continue to stress that frequent hand washing, social distancing and staying home are the best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

“Stay in your place, maintain your space and cover your face,” said Bruce Barton, director of the Riverside County Emergency Management Department.

#

Twitter post March 31, 2020:



Dr. Cameron Kaiser
@RivCoDoc

New public health recommendation to cover the face:
ow.ly/Ygl250z1yKC #ruhealth #coronavirus #rivconow

COVID-19 RESPONSE
Riverside University Health System - Public Health

1 STAY IN PLACE

2 MAINTAIN YOUR SPACE

3 COVER YOUR FACE

BANDANA **NECK GAITER** **HOMEMADE**

X DO NOT PURCHASE
N95 MASK **SURGICAL MASK**

MEDICAL MASKS SUCH AS SURGICAL AND N95 MASKS ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY AND NEEDED BY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS.
TO PREVENT SHORTAGES, THE PUBLIC SHOULD AVOID PURCHASING THESE MASKS.

3:45 PM · Mar 31, 2020 · Hootsuite Inc.

183 Retweets 209 Likes 26 Quote Tweets

Facebook post March 31, 2020:

 Riverside University Health System - Public Health
March 31 · 🌐

New public health recommendation to cover the face:
<http://ow.ly/Yuh450z1yKE> #ruhealth #coronavirus #rivconow



1 STAY IN PLACE



2 MAINTAIN YOUR SPACE



3 COVER YOUR FACE



BANDANA NECK GAITER HOMEMADE



DO NOT PURCHASE

N95 MASK SURGICAL MASK

MEDICAL MASKS SUCH AS SURGICAL AND N95 MASKS ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY AND NEEDED BY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS.
TO PREVENT SHORTAGES, THE PUBLIC SHOULD AVOID PURCHASING THESE MASKS.

👍❤️👎 224 85 Comments 2.2K Shares

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share 🌐

County of Riverside (Urban County)
Category: Disaster/Emergency Response & Management

Public service announcement, released March 31, 2020:



Watch full video here: <https://vimeo.com/402767450>

County of Riverside (Urban County)
Category: Disaster/Emergency Response & Management

RUHS-Public Health Facebook Livestream Update on March 31, 2020:




Watch full video here:

<https://www.facebook.com/countyriversidedepartmentofpublichealth/videos/1273792999497932/>

County of Riverside (Urban County)
Category: Disaster/Emergency Response & Management

Virtual Round Table (English) April 24, 2020:

 Riverside University Health System - Public Health was live.
April 24 · 🌐

COVID-19 Virtual Roundtable - April 24, 2020



  44 129 Comments 29 Shares 4.5K Views

 Like  Comment  Share 

Watch full video here:

<https://www.facebook.com/countyriversidedepartmentofpublichealth/videos/547963445856373/>

County of Riverside (Urban County)
Category: Disaster/Emergency Response & Management

Virtual Roundtable (Spanish) on April 24, 2020:

 Riverside University Health System - Public Health was live. ...
April 24 · 🌐

COVID-19 Virtual Roundtable - Spanish April 24, 2020



18 13 Comments 8 Shares 874 Views

Watch full video here:

<https://www.facebook.com/countyriversidedepartmentofpublichealth/videos/54006019973076/>



1 STAY IN PLACE



2 MAINTAIN YOUR SPACE



3 COVER YOUR FACE



MEDICAL MASKS SUCH AS SURGICAL AND N95 MASKS ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY AND NEEDED BY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS.

TO PREVENT SHORTAGES, THE PUBLIC SHOULD AVOID PURCHASING THESE MASKS.



1 QUÉDESE EN CASA



2 MANTENGA SU DISTANCIA



3 CUBRA SU CARA



LAS MÁSCARAS MÉDICAS, COMO LAS MASCARILLAS QUIRÚRGICAS Y N95, ESTAN EN ESCASEZ Y SON NECESITADAS POR PROFESIONALES DE SALUD.

PARA PREVENIR LA ESCASEZ, EL PÚBLICO DEBE EVITAR COMPRAR ESTAS MÁSCARAS.

County of Riverside (Urban County)
Category: Disaster/Emergency Response & Management

Billboard, ran in digital and vinyl billboards along the 91, 15 and 10 Freeways:



County of Riverside (Urban County)
Category: Disaster/Emergency Response & Management

Commercial in English, ran on Spectrum Cable and streaming devices:



Watch full commercial here: <https://vimeo.com/451686484>

Commercial in Spanish, ran on Spectrum Cable and streaming devices::



Watch full commercial here: <https://vimeo.com/451685861>

Three Simple Things Commercial (English), ran on Spectrum Cable, DirecTv and streaming devices:



Watch full commercial here: <https://vimeo.com/440155213>

Billboard, ran in digital and vinyl billboards along the 91, 60 and 10 Freeways:



Masks are Medicine logo:

