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Public Information Officer: DeAnne Gallegos

Release Number: SJC_022

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SAN JUAN COUNTY CO: A resident has tested positive for COVID-19 ANTIBODIES conducted by the Silverton Clinic. San Juan County Public Health implemented contact tracing and case investigation.

A person received serological (antibody) testing through the Silverton Clinic and has met other case criteria resulting in the first Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) reportable case of COVID-19 in San Juan County. ***“We have been aware that some people in our community may have had COVID-19 or have been exposed to Coronavirus early on before testing was readily available in our region.”*** says Becky Joyce, Director of San Juan County Public Health. Investigation and contact tracing are key components to confirming a case, especially if antibody testing is being used.

On May, 4th, San Juan County Public Health (SJCPH) made the COVID-19 Community Testing Site operational in Silverton. SJCPH is now offering the PCR tests supplied by CDPHE, which identifies a current infection. Patients are screened for symptoms and must have an order from a prescribing Healthcare Provider to receive the free viral test. If a person does not have a provider, Public Health can arrange a consultation. Antibody tests, also known as serological tests, are now available from health care facilities such as the Silverton Clinic and Cedar Diagnostics (Durango) by appointment. However, Joyce cautions rushing to a lab to get one. Use of serological tests may give a false sense of safety to patients. While results from these tests may indicate that a patient has been exposed to COVID-19, they cannot reliably determine if the patient is currently infected. Due to open questions related to antibodies and immunity, serological tests cannot definitively predict whether a patient will be immune to infection with the virus in the future, or if they can currently spread the virus to others. Negative antibody test results can be the result of testing early in the infection, prior to the development of a strong immunological response. The most accurate, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved testing available at this time is molecular based PCR test. At this time, the CDPHE and the FDA do not recommend antibody tests as the main test to be used as there are issues with accuracy and efficacy. Tests are one piece of a complex puzzle that public health workers use to determine the validity of a case and to track the spread of COVID-19.

If persons have had symptoms as far back as January or currently have symptoms, they can self report in the CDPHE Symptom Tracker <https://intake-app-dot-cdphe-erm.appspot.com/intake-form>. This data can assist our team in monitoring for a potential outbreak and enable us to take early steps to stop it.

With testing available the Public Health and Incident Management Team were not surprised to find a case in San Juan County. Joyce reiterated the importance of following the community mitigation measures such as wearing a mask in public, frequent hand washing and maintaining physical distancing practices. ***“You do not know if you will or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, so it is important to follow the guidelines for your safety and the safety of others.”***

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For the most up to date information on how to take precautions against the spread of COVID-19, visit San Juan County’s website at sanjuancolorado.us and the State of Colorado COVID19 website: [Colorado COVID-19 webpage](https://colorado.gov/covid19).

To receive San Juan County Office of Emergency Management email updates, sign up at pio@sanjuancolorado.us

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If you need further information about testing, please contact SJCPH at 970-387-0242.

If you have questions about antibody testing and have an order from a prescribing Healthcare Provider, please contact the Silverton Clinic at 970-387-5114.

For more information, please visit <https://covid19.colorado.gov/>

<https://sanjuancounty.colorado.gov/>

PHOTO: EMT Tyler George, in full personal protective equipment ready to conduct a test.



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