



ALAMEDA COUNTY COVID-19 HEALTH EMERGENCY

COUNTY OF ALAMEDA ★ CALIFORNIA

Office of Emergency Services
4985 Broder Blvd, Dublin, CA 94568

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jerri Randrup

Communications Director

eoc-pio@acgov.org

Alameda County Continues Focus on Community Resilience and Reducing Health Inequities as it Reaches Two-Year Anniversary of Original COVID-19 Shelter-in-Place Order

ALAMEDA COUNTY, CA – ALAMEDA COUNTY, CA – This week marks the two-year anniversary of the first shelter-in-place order due to COVID-19 in Alameda County.

The Alameda County Health Care Services Agency began tracking the novel coronavirus in late 2019. When the first case emerged in the Bay Area in late February 2020, Alameda County's Health Officer joined with Bay Area region colleagues to issue the first shelter-in-place health order in the nation. California's statewide shelter-in-place order followed a few days later as the COVID-19 pandemic took hold.

"While the past two years have been challenging for all of us, what stands out is the dedication and resiliency that residents, essential community partners, and our staff have demonstrated," said Colleen Chawla, Director of the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency (HCSA). "As we reach the second anniversary, we pause to express our gratitude for everyone's sustained cooperation and teamwork."

Alameda County moved quickly to slow the spread of the virus. Schools closed, businesses shuttered, and all residents faced personal and financial uncertainties alongside health challenges.

"Our businesses, residents and families—especially in our hardest hit communities—have struggled but remained resilient," said Alameda County Board of Supervisors President Keith Carson. "As we continue to raise awareness about the importance of vaccination and prevention, leveraging our diverse communities is critical. Together we'll continue responding to the long-term health inequities and rise up to be stronger than before."

Long-existing health disparities in high poverty neighborhoods and communities of color were amplified due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To alleviate this, Alameda County prioritized resources early in the pandemic to directly serve the hardest-hit communities, focusing on community testing, case investigation and contact tracing, isolation and quarantine supports, and vaccination. Adding to those early investments, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors recently approved new awards totaling \$12.2 million to 11 community-led Coalitions to expand COVID vaccine access and build upon community resiliencies towards pandemic recovery.

MEDIA
EOC-PIO@acgov.org

PUBLIC
ncov@acgov.org

PHONE
510.268.2101



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“Community coalitions are key partners in ensuring continued vaccination success with our communities of color,” said Kimi Watkins-Tartt, HCSA’s Public Health Department Director. “They are instrumental in outreach, health education, vaccine appointment, and resource navigation, and providing culturally competent/bilingual staff at county-supported vaccine sites. Alameda County continues to prioritize improving vaccination rates where we see the greatest disparities.”

Alameda County is now back at pre-Omicron levels of cases and hospitalizations, and the county is at the “Low Community Level” on the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s \(CDC’s\) new tool](#) to help communities decide what prevention steps to take. Prevention steps for low levels of COVID-19 include staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and getting testing if symptoms are present.

“Even though conditions have improved, COVID is here to stay and the choices we make will affect us, our households, and the community,” said Dr. Nicholas Moss, Alameda County Health Officer. “The past two years taught us that COVID-19 vaccines, masks and other precautions work and can be tailored based on our environment, age and health condition. The Health Department remains vigilant against this evolving virus, and we are prepared to implement County-wide measures and require precautions as needed.”

Alameda County health officials strongly recommend the following for protection against COVID-19:

- Get vaccinated and boosted – vaccination is the single most important public health strategy to prevent spread of severe disease and death from COVID-19.
- Layer your protection — stay up to date on vaccines, wear masks, get tested if exposed or ill, and stay home if sick.
- Talk to your medical provider if you are immunocompromised or have other health risks.
- Wear a mask, especially if you answer yes to any of the following:
 - Are you over age 65 or have health issues that puts you at risk for a severe case of COVID-19?
 - Are you missing one or more of your COVID-19 vaccine doses?
 - Do you live/visit with people at risk of going to the hospital if they get COVID-19?
 - Do you go to work with your co-workers or interact with the public regularly?
 - Are [cases high](#) where you live or where you are going?

For more information about vaccine clinics and how to make appointments, visit the county’s [vaccine clinic page](#) or myturn.ca.gov. Residents looking for testing sites can visit the county’s [testing page](#) to find a location.

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