



ALAMEDA COUNTY COVID-19 HEALTH EMERGENCY PRESS RELEASE

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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Street Level Health Project and Mam Community Leaders Join Alameda County in Extending Mask On! Campaign to Fruitvale District’s Mam Community

Campaign emphasizes the importance of outreach to monolingual community in one of the County’s most impacted areas and wearing a face covering any time you leave home

OAKLAND, CA – Today Alameda County Public Health Department Director Kimi Watkins-Tartt joined Street Level Health Project’s Executive Director Gabriela Galicia and Mam community leaders to launch an extension of the County’s Mask On! campaign in an area that has been hard hit by COVID-19 and with an indigenous community that has been largely invisible in the media.

Mam is predominantly a spoken language and Mam speakers are often unrepresented in outreach to Latinx communities. A notable concentration of Mam people from Guatemala reside in Oakland’s Fruitvale District.

The 94601 zip code, which encompasses the Fruitvale District, has a COVID-19 case rate of 2,870 per 100,000 residents and a COVID-19 testing positivity rate of 16.3 percent. As seen across the state, cases among Latinx residents make up more than half of all cases in Alameda County, with a case rate of 1,953 per 100,000 residents. Alameda County’s overall case rate is 863.5 per 100,000 residents and a positivity rate of 5.3 percent.

Alameda County’s Mask On! campaign launched on Fourth of July weekend to promote correct and consistent use of face coverings. The campaign is part of a broader County strategy that includes widely available access to testing, resources and supports to help people safely isolate and quarantine, prevention outreach and education, and plans to protect health care systems from becoming overwhelmed. To date, the Mask On! campaign has distributed 5,000 reusable face coverings produced by local vendors. This Saturday, 30 Mam- and Spanish-speaking community members and volunteers will walk the area and distribute 1,000 masks, as well as hand sanitizer and educational material.

“While the impacts of COVID-19 are felt across Alameda County, the Fruitvale District’s residents and workers have carried an especially heavy burden of disease,” said Kimi Watkins-Tartt, Alameda County Public Health Director. “We’re thrilled to bring the Mask On! campaign to the Mam community and use this

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opportunity to connect our friends, family and neighbors to prevention resources and information. We're grateful to be able to partner with Street Level Health Project and local Mam leaders in doing this critical, life-saving work."

Street Level Health Project, an Oakland-based community center is supporting outreach for the County's hard-to-reach populations, including monolingual, non-English speakers. Street Level Health Project has been improving the well-being of underinsured, uninsured, and recently arrived immigrants in Alameda County since 2002.

"Street Level is facilitating a space for Alameda County Public Health Department and Mam leaders, who are themselves greatly impacted by COVID-19, to learn more about the gaps in resources and information about prevention measures in this community," said Gabriela Galicia, Executive Director of Street Level Health Project. "We are happy to be part of convening this community-led, grassroots extension of the Mask On! campaign in the Fruitvale. We hope to reach people on the streets in their own language and build a sense of community supporting community. We are protecting one another during these difficult times. We are humbled and grateful to be initiating these efforts with these Mam leaders and hope this is just a start."

"I see the need for us to take the initiative to educate and raise awareness in our Mam and Latino community about COVID-19. Our community is strong, but I personally know entire individuals and families who have suffered from this disease," said Norma Calmo, Mam interpreter and community member who supported planning the event. "Many do not have jobs or the economic resources to be able to take care of their needs and they put themselves at risk of being exposed. The message we want to give is to stay home when you can, please wear your mask if you need to go out and keep a physical distance. And finally, don't get together in large groups, like parties. Let's take care of each other today to be together tomorrow."

"We work seven days a week delivering COVID-19 tests results from our Fruitvale Community Testing site. At least 40 percent of our calls are to families from Guatemala," said Dr. Paul Bayard, Chief Medical Officer at La Clínica de La Raza. "All too often, adults in the household work in essential occupations and as day laborers, and the crowded housing conditions they return to facilitate the spread of the virus to almost everyone in the household, young and old. We have seen this cycle repeated too many times and stand with our County and community partners in trying to break it."

For more information about Alameda County's COVID-19 response, visit covid-19.acgov.org.

Visit <http://streetlevelhealthproject.org/> to learn more about Street Level Health Project.

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