Week of October 26, 2020

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency Update

Please share with your networks

Alameda County maintained its position in the Orange (Moderate) Tier on the State’s color-coded Blueprint for a Safer Economy over the last two weeks. Case rates and hospitalizations remain stable although we are observing slight increases. We are monitoring cases and hospitalizations following recent reopened activities and the adoption of less restrictive State guidance on private gatherings with the hope that we’ll meet State metrics to move to the Yellow Tier in the near future.

With Halloween and Día de los Muertos occurring this week, we remind our community that trick-or-treating and parties are considered high risk due to close contact with people outside of one's household. Please remember to wear a mask whenever you leave your home and keep at least six feet of physical distance from anyone you don't live with. Get your flu shot, and don't forget to wash your hands frequently.

We’re pleased to announce a new series of community voiced Public Service Announcements (PSAs) including Aaron Ortiz, CEO, La Familia, encouraging others to help stop the spread of COVID-19 in English and Spanish. Community trusted messengers include Greg Hodges from the Brotherhood of Elders Network, and Joe Hawkins from the Oakland LGBTQ Community Center. More voices are on the way and we are grateful the support of these community leaders in helping to share important prevention messages.

Finally, as we approach next Tuesday, we are also mindful of the challenges that limit participation in the election process for many people including those experiencing homelessness. Our Health Care for the Homeless team is partnering with the Oakland A’s, AC Transit, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and Social Services Agency to help Alameda County’s most vulnerable residents vote safely in the general election. The County is also partnering with the Coliseum and Oakland to host three days of COVID-19 testing October 31 through November 2, and free flu vaccine on
November 3.

Each week we provide a digest of new information sourced from presentations to the Board of Supervisors and other key stakeholders. We hope you find this summary useful, and we appreciate your readership and your support.

Alameda County Dashboard  Public Health Department Website

Alameda County Schools Reopening Update

Staring November 9, middle and high schools (7-12 grades) that complete a COVID-19 health and safety reopening plan may reopen for in-person learning if ready. The decision and timing of when to open rests with each school and school district. Schools are not required to open. Middle and high schools that choose to reopen for in-person learning must post their reopening plans to their school or school district website and submit their plan to the Alameda County Office of Education. This information is shared directly with the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency. Our Agency will continue to support schools and school districts with COVID-19 safety guidance and technical assistance, evaluating strategies, and support during outbreaks.

State Health Equity Metric

As of October 26 (reflecting data from October 11th - 17th) test positivity in the least advantaged areas of Alameda County was 2.5% compared to 1.6% countywide. We continue to see an overall decline in the positivity rate in our priority neighborhoods, although there are a pockets of higher rates. We need to remain in the Orange Tier for another week, and our metrics need to meet the requirements of the Yellow (Minimum) Tier for two consecutive weeks before we can move into the Yellow Tier.

Testing

Testing rates remain high, with a 7-day average for testing over 5,000. The County launched a new testing site at the Henry J. Kaiser Center in Oakland on Tuesday, October 27, in partnership with Alameda Health System. Adults can get tested on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. Essential workers will be prioritized for appointments from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday and Thursdays. Children ages two and older can be tested on Saturdays.

Our 13 community testing sites in Oakland, Berkeley, Fremont, Pleasanton, and San
Leandro are still active, along with our seven mobile testing vendors which reach up to an additional 700 individuals a week. We also launched a testing site at Lake Merritt on October 24, which will take place every Saturday and Sunday through November and testing at the Oakland Coliseum from October 31 to November 3. Additional testing sites, opportunities and events can be found on our COVID-19 testing page.

**Trends in Cases and Hospitalizations**

The number of new cases per day and hospitalizations remain stable at lower levels. The October 26 metrics reflect the State's 7-day average and 7-day lag (data reported October 10th - 17th):

- The unadjusted case rate is 3.3 per 100,000.

As of October 24:

- Cumulative cases were 23,312, and cumulative deaths were 461.
- COVID-19 positive patients included 54 hospitalized and 14 in ICU beds.

**Case and Contact Investigation, Isolation and Quarantine**

Alameda County currently has 41 outbreak investigators and 125 trained case investigators/contact tracers, including 36 community-based organizations. Four new CBO teams will be added at the end of October. Last week 53.6% of cases were reached within 24 hours of receiving contact information, 58.2% of cases were reached within 48 hours, and 62.9% were reached within the week.

As of October 26, the occupancy rate was 94% for all Safer Ground units in Project Roomkey. Roomkey isolation/quarantine hotel rooms and trailer units continue to provide housing for people living in crowded conditions or are experiencing Homelessness. We are still in the process of preparing for transition from interim homeless housing to permanent supportive housing through Project Homekey.

**Don't Hesitate. Vaccinate!**

Influenza immunization is critical this season and the Flu Vaccination planning team continues to finalize more events and sites throughout the County. Last Friday, a flu clinic was held at the Castro Valley Adult High School and 798 flu shots were administered to children and adults.

Upcoming community flu clinics:
Updated flu information can be found on our Public Health website along with the current list of county immunization clinics. Alameda County, the California State Department of Public Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone ages six months and older. Getting the flu vaccine reduces illness and transmission in our community, reduces clinic visits and hospitalization, and prevents illnesses that mimic COVID-19.