

CORONAVIRUS UPDATES

Get the latest news from our Public Health Department

Week of December 7, 2020

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency Update

Please share with your networks

Last Friday, we joined five Bay Area health jurisdictions to announce a [Stay-at-Home](#) order with temporary restrictions that are in effect through January 4, 2021. Early action was needed because of the rapid increase in new COVID-19 cases in our county and neighboring counties, and rising hospitalization rates that are the highest yet. We are at risk of exhausting our hospital system capacity and we are already seeing more cases following the Thanksgiving holiday. As we continue working through the largest surge Alameda County has experienced to date, we want to share key activities underway to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and move us forward.

COVID Vaccine

Vaccine will be distributed per a framework determined by federal health agencies and adopted by the California Department of Public Health. Vaccine is voluntary for everyone and this initial framework uses a phased approach. In this phased approach, hospitals workers receive vaccine first, followed by first responders and long-term care facilities, front line and essential workers, and then eventually the general public. For more information about vaccine planning, please see item below.

CA Notify

CA Notify is a voluntary COVID-19 exposure notification that works by communicating random, anonymous codes with phones that come within 6 feet of each other for longer than 15 minutes. We are excited for the potential of this technology to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community. Please activate exposure notifications in your smart phone to help stop the spread of COVID-19. For more information, see the column below.

Home for the Holidays

Please join us in reminding Alameda County residents that we are under a stay-at-home order through January 4. No one should be traveling or gathering with others outside their household this holiday season. If you must go out for essential services, please wear a mask and keep six feet away from others.

CARES Funding

Additional efforts are underway to sustain our COVID-19 response as federal CARES funding expires by year's end. While we are optimistic that there will be another federal stimulus, we're working on bridge proposals that leverage state, local and

partner resources to maintain our response efforts. We're working on plans for testing, isolation hotels, and overall response operations, and we will have more to share in the coming weeks.

We're in this together and we can flatten the curve one more time. As always, you'll find this week's Board of Supervisors [update](#), previous presentations, and back issues of our newsletter [here](#).

[Alameda County Dashboard](#)

[Public Health Department Website](#)

COVID Vaccine



Alameda County will receive 13,650 doses of the Pfizer vaccine next week. The vaccine doses will first be offered to high-risk acute care hospital workers and residents and staff of residential care facilities for the elderly (RCFEs). We have been planning with our hospital and clinical partners and how this first round goes will help

us refine our approach for the next shipment.

We have successfully assisted all Residential Care Facilities for Elders (RCFEs) in the County to register in the Federal program to receive vaccines directly via Walgreens and CVS. We understand the program will begin this month and we will be monitoring. If there is a delay, RCFEs in the highest risk neighborhoods will be our next priority group.

Our partnerships with cities will be crucial throughout the next year and we look forward to working together on outreach and logistical planning. Our goals are to be transparent, to provide accurate and timely information to help people make informed decisions, and to promote broad participation in vaccination. We will be launching a Community Advisory Group later this month to help us build trust in the community, refine messaging, and co-develop strategies to increase vaccine uptake. We also have a communications workgroup coordinating across our teams and with partners.

As a reminder, we've added a [vaccines page](#) to our COVID-19 website, which includes the [plan](#) we submitted to the State, presentations from the California Community Vaccine Advisory Committee, and a December 8 [FAQ](#) from CDPH. The page will be updated regularly with public presentations, meetings, and additional information and resources as they become available.

CA Notify Launched

The State launched [CA Notify](#) this week, the COVID-19 mobile notification system that is available to all California residents:

- Your privacy is protected as your identity is not known and your location is not tracked.
- By voluntarily activating Bluetooth notifications, Alameda County residents

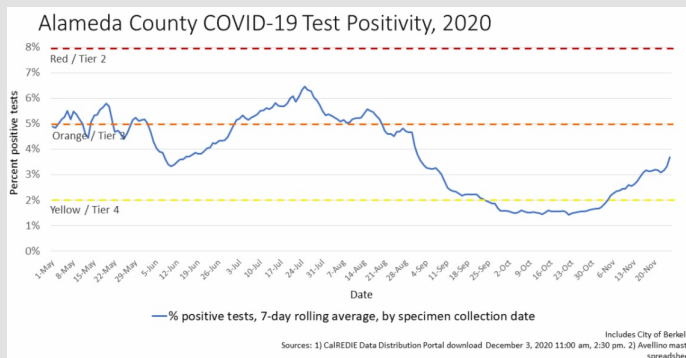
could get alerts about an exposure earlier, access testing earlier, and start isolation/quarantine earlier.

- During a big surge, CA Notify will also help relieve some pressure for case and contact investigations teams.

Once you activate and opt in, all you do is keep your cell phone Bluetooth on and you will only receive alerts if you were in close contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer) with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. All notifications are anonymous. We're excited for the potential of this technology to help us slow the spread of COVID-19.



State Health Equity Metric

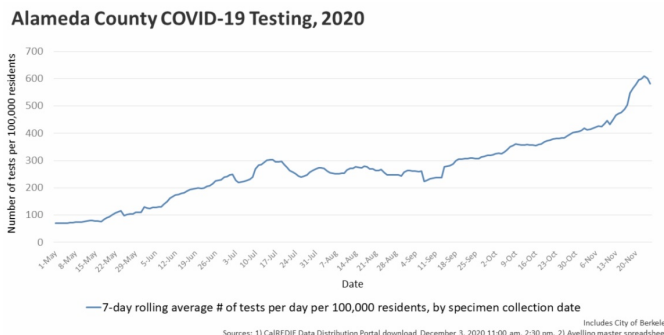


As of December 5 (data reported November 29 – December 5), test positivity in the least advantaged areas of Alameda County was 6.9% compared to 4.9% countywide this week. Our collaborations with 11 Community Based Organization (CBO) Outreach and Health Education (OHE)

teams to disseminate COVID-19 prevention messaging, content, and collateral will continue, especially during this time where we see our positivity rate and other metrics increase.

Testing

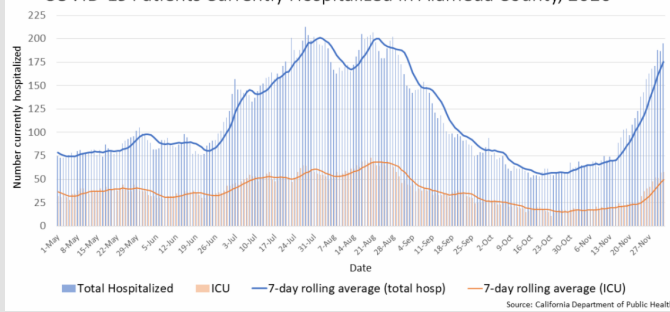
Testing rates remain high, with a 7-day average for [testing](#) over 8,000 which is 1,000 more tests than last week. Some test sites are conducting 450-500 test per day. Special thanks to the staff at our [14 community testing sites](#) who are conducting tests during the week, over the weekend at Lake Merritt, and our seven mobile testing vendors. More information about our testing sites, opportunities, and events can be found on our [COVID-19 testing page](#).



Trends in Cases and Hospitalizations

We continue to see significant increases in the number of new cases per day and hospitalizations. We anticipate

COVID-19 Patients Currently Hospitalized in Alameda County, 2020



- The unadjusted case rate is 17.2 per 100,000.
- Cumulative cases were 32,545 (up 3,069), and cumulative deaths were 522 (up 10)
- COVID-19 positive patients included 227 (up 59) hospitalized and 58 (up 10) in ICU beds.

that hospitalizations and rates will continue to rise since these rates typically increase several weeks after case rate increases.

The December 5 metrics reflect the State's 7-day average and 4-day lag (data reported November 29 – December 5):

Contact Investigation/Contact Tracing (CI/CT)

Alameda County currently has 41 outbreak investigators and 116 case investigators/contact tracers in addition to 60 staff from our CBO contracts for a total of 217. The number of new COVID-19 cases has significantly increased and we implemented a tiered approach to effectively manage the new cases. Focusing on the highest impacted zip codes based on the Healthy Place index, prioritizing cases within six days of specimen collection date, and incorporating CDC guidance has helped us reach cases in most need of our assistance during this period.

HOW DOES CONTACT TRACING WORK?

If you test positive for COVID-19:

- Separate yourself from those in your home and avoid contact with others to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Your local public health department will contact you.
- Those people will be told they may have been exposed, but they will NOT be told your name or any personal information.
- They will connect you to medical care and help you find resources and support if needed. They may stay in touch with you to see if you're okay.
- They will ask about places you have been and the people you have spent time with recently. Your information is confidential and will not be shared, and you will not be asked about your immigration status.

If you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19:

- You will receive a call from a public health worker who will help you understand next steps.
- They will provide access to testing at no cost to you and medical care, if needed. You will also be offered to receive support from others in your home to protect those around you.
- They will stay in touch to see if you develop symptoms or need support to help.

To learn more, visit californiaconnected.ca.gov

Isolation Housing

As of December 9, the occupancy rate for all Safer Ground units was 92% for hotel rooms and trailers sheltering 1,232 individuals. [Project 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 a transition from interim homeless housing to permanent supportive housing through [Project Homekey](#).



COVID-19 and Mental Health

Supervisor Richard Valle recently launched a Mental Health Series. Episode 1 is focused on youth and features our Health Officer Dr. Nick Moss addressing COVID-19, and our Behavioral Health Director Dr. Karyn Tribble offering self-care guidance. You can view the episode on [YouTube](#).

Did you receive the update from a colleague? Click here to join our mailing list.

[Weekly Update PDF Version](#)



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