

CORONAVIRUS UPDATES

Get the latest news from our Public Health Department

Week of December 14, 2020

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency Update

Please share with your networks

Good news in the fight against COVID-19. Alameda County received the first shipment of COVID-19 vaccine this morning! These first 13,650 doses will go to hospital workers and 911 first responders who are at highest risk for exposure to the virus. Our primary goal is to ensure safe, equitable, and broad distribution of the vaccine in Alameda County. To achieve this goal, we need partnership with community, clinical, and non-clinical providers, and City and County agencies. While it's still early in the vaccine process, arrival of this first shipment brings great hope in a year that has been dominated by COVID-19.

As we work through the vaccine delivery frameworks approved by State and Federal health agencies, COVID-19 cases and hospitalization rates continue to increase at an alarming rate in our County. **Last week (December 5 – 12) was the single worst week of the pandemic so far in Alameda County.** We observed 5000 new COVID-19 cases and hospitalization rates were five times higher than a month ago, and Bay Area counties are observing similar and worse rates. The [State announced](#) that the Bay Area Region fell below 15 percent ICU bed capacity just yesterday. As a result, the entire Bay Area is required to the State's Stay-At-Home restrictions for a minimum of three weeks (January 7, 2021). Because Alameda County entered the Stay-at-Home restrictions last week, our current [Shelter-On-Place orders](#) remain unchanged.

Stop the Surge

As we work quickly to reverse the current COVID-19 trends in our County, we ask residents to help by continuing to practice proven COVID-19 prevention like postponing travel, avoiding gatherings, and wearing face coverings for essential activity. Residents can help our County move forward by promoting the message to [Stop the Surge](#). Please follow [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#) and help us push this message and other rapidly evolving information across our County.

Many thanks to the hundreds of staff across our Health Care Services Agency, our community partners, and our cities who continue working tirelessly on navigating through this pandemic. 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

Despite current COVID-19 circumstances, there is a sense of hope now that we have 12,675 doses of Pfizer's COVID vaccine for Alameda County and 975 doses to the City of Berkeley Local Health Jurisdiction. Alameda County [prioritized first responders and hospital staff at the highest risk](#) of contracting COVID-19 for the first round of doses. We are finalizing a point of distribution (POD) at St. Rose Hospital, Hayward, to provide vaccinations to this group. We expect delivery of additional doses in the coming weeks and months, to be distributed per prioritization [frameworks](#) approved by State and Federal health agencies.



Health officers and federal officials believe that the use of the vaccine, continued daily COVID-19 prevention tactics, and ongoing public health work will ultimately end the pandemic. The Association of Bay Area Health Officers (ABAHO) [released a joint statement](#) marking the arrival of the first shipments of the COVID-19 vaccine. Please visit our [vaccines page](#) for ongoing updates including new public presentations, meetings, general information and resources.

Help Keep Our Homeless Communities Healthy

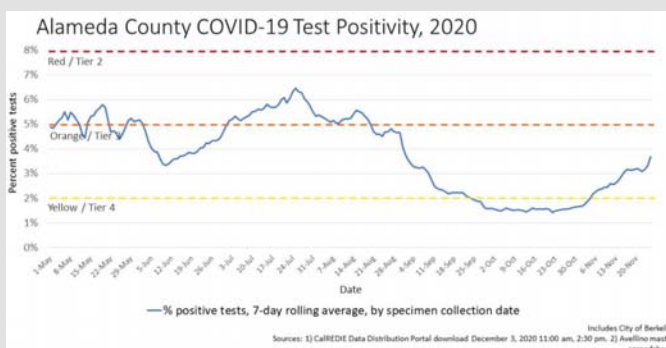
Give the gift of health



During this season of giving, Dr. Harrison Alter, Interim Medical Director of Alameda County's Health Care for the Homeless Program, is asking the public to forgo the tradition of giving directly to the homeless community (e.g., delivering items to encampments). In an [op-ed](#) published by the San Francisco Chronicle, Dr. Alter explains how the majority of the COVID-19 outbreaks occurred in the homeless community after some type of interaction with individuals from the housed community took place. During this holiday season, please stay home and consider contributing to the organizations that regularly work with the homeless community.

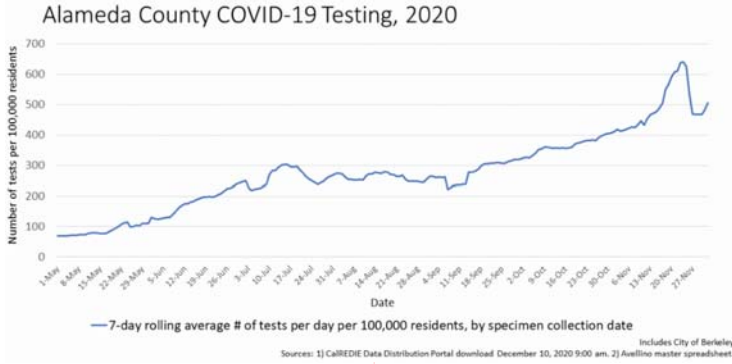
State Health Equity Metric

As of December 14 (data reported December 6 – December 12), the test positivity rate in the least advantaged areas of Alameda County was 9.2% (up 2.3%) compared to 6.0% (up 1.1%) countywide this week. Our 12 Community Based Organization (CBO) Outreach and Health Education (OHE) partners are helping us disseminate COVID-19 prevention messaging and collateral into priority neighborhoods, and visiting testing sites to provide guidance.



Testing

Testing rates remain high,

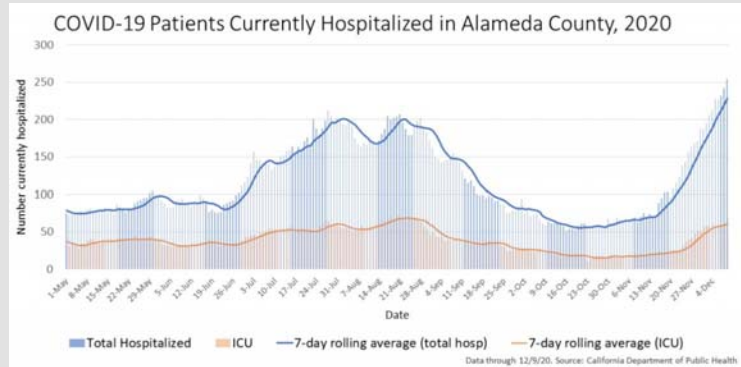


with a 7-day average for testing over 9,000, which is 1,000 more tests than last week. More information about our current testing sites, opportunities, and events can be found on our [COVID-19 testing page](#).

Trends in Cases and Hospitalizations

The number of new cases and hospitalizations per day are significantly higher than last week's rates. The December 14 metrics reflect the State's 7-day average and 7-day lag (data reported December 6 – December 12):

- The unadjusted case rate is 33.7 per 100,000
- Cumulative cases 38, 971 and cumulative deaths were 558
- COVID-19 positive patients: 330 hospitalized and 95 in ICU beds



We anticipate that hospitalization rates will continue to rise again since these rates typically increase several weeks after the case rate increases.

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 cases in the CI/CT queue was 1,840 as of December 13. We are continuing to focus 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 when appropriate.

You can activate [CA Notify](#) on your smart phone to receive COVID-19 exposure notifications.

Isolation Housing

As of December 16, the occupancy rate for all Safer Ground units was 89% for hotel rooms and trailers sheltering 1,200 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](#).

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