



San Francisco Department of Public Health

Grant Colfax, MD
Director of Health

City and County of San Francisco
London N. Breed
Mayor

Director's Report for Health Commission Meeting of February 15, 2022

A current overview of issues affecting the state of public health in San Francisco

<https://www.dph.org/dph/comupg/aboutdph/insideDept/dirRpts/default.asp>

Today, there are over 117,000 San Francisco residents with confirmed cases of COVID-19. And, sadly, a total of 734 San Franciscans have died. The San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH) sends our condolences to their loved ones.

SF hires 100 public health workers with streamlined hiring process

The expedited effort to hire behavioral health staff as part of the 90-day Emergency Declaration in the Tenderloin is more than 50% complete with 100 public health staff onboarded and a remaining 100 staff on track to meet the March hiring deadline.

DPH and the San Francisco Department of Human Resources (DHR) initiated the hiring under the State of Emergency in the Tenderloin, which Mayor Breed declared in December 2021 to address the crisis of people dying of drug overdoses in the neighborhood. As part of the emergency powers, DPH and DHR are streamlining administrative aspects of the City's hiring process in order to quickly fill vacancies and new positions while adhering to competitive, fair, and equity-based selection processes. Without the Emergency Declaration, hiring 200 behavioral health workers under the City's current hiring process would take at least six months, instead of less than three.

The 200 positions include behavioral health clinicians, pharmacists, health workers, and others who can build out the programs and services needed to expand the City's behavioral health services and enact the vision of Mental Health SF. The MHSF initiative expands access to mental health services, substance use treatment, and psychiatric medications to all adult San Franciscans with mental illness and/or substance abuse challenges who are homeless, uninsured, or enrolled in Medi-Cal or Healthy San Francisco. The implementation of MHSF is directly linked to improving health outcomes in the Tenderloin, where clients are disproportionately located.

Early in the pandemic, similar practices were put in place under the COVID-19 Emergency Declaration, which allowed for the hiring of approximately 200 nurses within 45 days or less.

SF joins 11 other Bay Area counties in changes to indoor mask mandates

In alignment with the State, the Bay Area counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma, and the City of Berkeley will lift universal mask requirements for most indoor public settings beginning Wednesday, February 16.



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Unvaccinated individuals over age 2 will continue to be required to wear masks in all indoor public settings. Businesses, venue operators and hosts may determine their own paths forward to protect staff and patrons and may choose to require all patrons to wear masks.

The change aligns with the California Department of Public Health's (CDPH) decision to let expire the statewide indoor mask requirement, which was instated on December 15 during the latest COVID-19 surge. **Indoor masking is still required by the State for everyone, regardless of vaccination status, in public transportation; health care settings; congregate settings like correctional facilities and homeless shelters; long term care facilities; and in K-12 schools and childcare settings.**

Bay Area health officers continue to strongly recommend masks be used as an effective tool to prevent the spread of the virus especially when case rates are high, or when additional personal protection is needed. Continuing to mask in indoor public settings, especially crowded or poorly ventilated spaces, [remains the safest choice for an individual](#) and protects those who are medically vulnerable or are not able to get vaccinated, like our youngest children. As evidence continues to show, vaccinations and boosters remain the best defense against the virus.

The highly contagious Omicron variant brought on a new stage of the pandemic with a high number of new infections, but significantly fewer cases of life-threatening illnesses, especially for those who are vaccinated and boosted. While relaxing indoor masking requirements is part of a population-level shift toward a "new normal" of living with the disease, the Health Officers recognize that essential workers and communities of color continue to be highly impacted by COVID-19 and will need additional support to limit widening health disparities. Changes to health orders and recommendations may be updated as Health Officers follow the science and the data to evaluate whether additional protective measures may be needed as the virus evolves and if future surges occur.

People should continue to choose layered prevention strategies, such as wearing well-fitted masks (N95 or double layer cloth over surgical are best); staying home and testing when symptomatic; testing before gatherings; and improving indoor ventilation in situations where these strategies can add protection for themselves and others. Staying "up to date" on vaccinations, meaning primary series and boosters when eligible, remains the most important way to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

By aligning with the state masking rules, the participating Bay Area counties will not need to meet previously established [criteria](#) for lifting local masking orders, which were devised at a different point in the pandemic.

San Francisco's cases declining

After reaching a high on January 9 of 2,258 new cases per day, San Francisco's case rates have rapidly declined to a 7-day average of 552 on February 1 and continue to drop. Meanwhile,



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hospitalizations, a lagging indicator of disease, have begun to drop and never exceeded the City's capacity during this latest surge because of the City's overall high rates of vaccinations (84%) and boosters (64%). San Francisco's universal mask mandate has been in place since August 2 when cases began climbing from the Delta variant. A combination of preventative strategies, which included mask use, vaccination, boosters and testing, along with the community's cooperation helped get the Bay Area through this last surge together as a stronger regional community.

Other San Francisco COVID-19 requirements

San Francisco will continue to require proof of vaccinations or a negative test to enter restaurants, bars, gyms and other settings where food and drink is consumed, or elevated breathing occurs. A patron who is unvaccinated may show proof of a recent negative COVID-19 test instead, and entry without proof of vaccination is no longer limited to those with a medical or religious exemption, per a new change in the City's health order. Additionally, patrons attending large indoor events are required to show proof of being "up-to-date" on vaccinations (including the primary series and a booster, if eligible) or have a recent negative test. The change updates the definition of "mega-event" from 500 to 1,000 in alignment with the State. A negative test could be a PCR-lab test within two days of attendance of the event, or one-day for a verified antigen test.

Masking remains for schools and childcare

CDPH continues to require masking in K-12 school settings but has indicated adjustments to the state's policies will be shared in the coming weeks. In the meantime, there is work to be done in closing the remaining gaps in vaccinations and boosters among children with a particular focus on equity gaps within the most highly impacted communities.

For early education programs, such as preschool and childcare settings, CDPH continues to require masking for children older than age two. Vaccinations for children under 5 are currently undergoing federal review. Workplaces will continue to follow the [COVID-19 prevention standards](#) set by CalOSHA.

Supporting the choice to mask

Some people may understandably feel anxious about these changes to masking requirements. People can continue to choose to wear face coverings around others whether it's mandated or not and should respect people's choices around their health. Community members who are vaccinated and choose not to mask should respect the choices of those who continue to mask. Officials ask residents and visitors to be kind and respectful as people evaluate their risks and make choices to protect themselves and those around them.

Updates to COVID guidance in childcare settings and youth sports

DPH has updated its COVID-19 isolation and quarantine guidance for childcare, preschools, early childhood education, and other settings serving children under 5 years of age in order to keep as many children as possible safely participating in these essential services.



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Under the [new guidance](#), effective February 1, children ages 2 and older who have tested positive for COVID-19 may return to childcare after 5 days of isolation with a negative test and no symptoms. Additionally, asymptomatic children of all ages with a close-contact exposure at a program may remain there with regular interval testing. These changes now mirror the requirements in K-12 schools.

For the time being, children ages 2 and older must still wear masks as an added layer of protection. Under previous guidance, young children in these settings who were positive or exposed to COVID were required to stay home for 10 days. Children under 2 years old are still required to complete a full 10-day isolation because they cannot wear masks safely.

Widespread community rates of COVID-19 due to the highly transmissible Omicron variant have brought about an increase in cases and exposures in all settings, including early education, which resulted in disruptions in childcare for families. The modifications in guidance, which mirror protocols used in school and other settings for older children and adults, are designed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 while minimizing program closure and absences. Programs may apply more restrictive measures if they so choose.

Additionally, guidance specifically for youth sports has been updated to allow players who are “up to date” on their vaccination status (completed primary series and received a booster, if eligible) to remove masks while practicing indoors under specific conditions.

The childcare guidance is as follows:

Isolation: For all programs serving children under 5, after a positive COVID-19 test, children over age 2 may return to childcare after 5 days of isolation with a negative repeat test as long as they are asymptomatic. Specifically, children over age 2 may return with a negative test and nap or eat with their masks off with other mitigation measures in place. Efforts should be made to ensure masking adherence in all situations where there are not clear [mask exemptions](#) (see [Guidance](#)).

Quarantine: For all programs serving children under 5, after a program-based exposure to a positive COVID-19 case (e.g. another child in the same class or cohort), asymptomatic children may continue to attend the program, regardless of age, with regular interval testing for the duration of quarantine (e.g. at minimum two times within a week at least 36 hours apart). See [CDC “Test-to-stay”](#) guidance or [CDPH’s group tracing model](#). This does not apply to home exposures.

Refer to the [Guide to COVID-19 Isolation & Quarantine](#) for all staff and volunteers.

For complete guidance pertaining to childcare and youth sports, see Guidance: Programs for Children and Youth: [Childcare, Out-of-school Time Programs and Day Camps](#)



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DPH Black History Month Events

Across DPH there are events occurring in recognition of Black History Month. These events include:

February 1, 2022

Black/African American Health Initiative Equity Learning Series: Bayard Rustin and James Baldwin: Freedom Fighters and Friends

February 7, 2022

Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day: The Dialogue Continues, Let's End Stigma Together

February 8, 2022

Black/African American Health Initiative Equity Learning Series: The Urgency of Intersectionality | Kimberlé Crenshaw

February 17, 2022

Black/African American Health Initiative Equity Learning Series: How COVID-19 Hollowed Out a Generation of Young Black Men

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwoc-ugqT8oEtZrLdF4gRx27K-vZyIYKg-I>

ZSFG Radiology Equity Book Club: Dying of Whiteness: How the Politics of Resentment is Killing America's Heartland

<https://tinyurl.com/ZSFGRadiologyBookClub>.

February 22, 2022

Black/African American Health Initiative Equity Learning Series: Reparations and the History of Economic Injustice

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0vcOmsrTkqH92x1SfFB9yJoYv3JKcvg6fv>

February 28, 2022

Primary Care: The State of Our Union

DPH website moves to sf.gov

DPH aims to provide low-barrier access to its services and information; in that spirit, DPH has begun to transition its public-facing websites to the sf.gov domain. Sf.gov has a highly accessible multilingual design that quickly connects users with the services they are seeking. We have rebuilt our Department home page on sf.gov/publichealth and will be redirecting visitors from dph.org to the new site within the next few weeks.

[DPH in the News](#)



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LAGUNA HONDA HOSPITAL AND REHABILITATION CENTER

February 2022

Health Commission - Director of Health Report

(February 3, 2022 Medical Exec Committee)

	February	(FY 2021-2022) Year-to-Date
New Appointments	1	13
Reinstatements	0	0
Reappointments	1	30
Delinquencies:	0	0
Reappointment Denials:	0	0
Resigned/Retired/Separated	1	11
Disciplinary Actions	0	0
Restriction/Limitation-Privileges	0	0
Deceased	0	1
Changes in Privileges		
Additions	0	0
Voluntary Relinquishments	0	0
Proctorship Completed	0	3
Proctorship Extension	0	0

Current Statistics – as of 2/01/2022	
Active Medical Staff	35
As-Needed Medical Staff	16
External Consultant Medical Staff	45
Courtesy Medical Staff	2



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Affiliated Health Practitioners	7
TOTAL MEMBERS	105
Applications in Process	1
Applications Withdrawn this month	0