



City and County of San Francisco  
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## **Director's Report for Health Commission Meeting of December 20, 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 187,000 San Francisco residents with confirmed cases of COVID-19. And, sadly, a total of 1,079 San Franciscans have died. The San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH) sends our condolences to their loved ones.*

### **WITH RESPIRATORY VIRUSES CIRCULATING, 12 BAY AREA HEALTH OFFICIALS RECOMMEND ACTIONS TO STAY HEALTHY FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

This holiday season, another surge in COVID infections, along with high levels of influenza (flu) and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), are straining healthcare systems and impacting families.

The good news is that there are easy actions everyone can take to stay healthy this season. Twelve Bay Area health officers recommend the following steps:

#### **Get Vaccinated Against Flu and COVID.**

- The updated Omicron COVID booster, also known as the bivalent booster, targets the Omicron variant, as well as the original 2020 virus. The Omicron boosters are available for ages six months and older. These improved vaccines are the best protection against severe symptoms of COVID and hospitalization.
- Earlier in the pandemic, COVID vaccination rates in the Bay Area were high, shielding some communities from the worst outcomes. This vaccine protection has decreased over time, but an Omicron COVID booster can rebuild it. In most parts of the Bay Area, less than half of eligible people have received the updated Omicron COVID booster.
- More people in the Bay Area are getting the flu this year than earlier in the pandemic. Flu is not the same as the common cold and can lead to sudden, severe illness in the very young, seniors, and those with underlying medical conditions.
- Now is the time to get your flu shot. Your doctor can give you the flu shot and the Omicron COVID booster in the same visit. COVID shots are free and other recommended immunizations are widely available at low or no cost.
- There is no vaccine for RSV, but simple measures like regular hand washing and covering coughs can help.



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### Stay Home if You Are Sick.

- No matter which virus you have, if you are feeling sick the best way to keep from spreading it to others is to stay home until you have recovered. If you think it might be COVID, get tested.
- People who need urgent or emergency medical care, including testing or treatment for influenza or COVID, should seek it.

### Wear a Mask in Indoor Public Places.

- Masks can prevent transmission of COVID, flu, RSV, and other respiratory viruses all at once.
- Wearing a high-quality mask, such as a KN94, KN95 or N95, can prevent you from getting sick and missing out on life, work, school, and holiday parties. Masking is strongly recommended indoors in public settings to prevent the spread of viruses and reduce the risk of illness.
- Masks also lower the likelihood that you pass on an infection if you are already sick, even if your symptoms are mild. This helps protect people around you, especially those at higher risk of serious illness.
- Improve ventilation indoors by turning on HVAC systems, filtering the air with a portable HEPA filter, pointing fans out open windows, or opening doors and windows when possible. These can all help viruses from spreading indoors.

### Get Tested Before an Indoor Gathering or if You Feel Sick.

- Reduce the chances of infecting someone else with COVID by finding out if you have the virus before gathering with others. Remember, COVID symptoms may be mild or absent. Make sure to stock up on home test kits.

### Get Treatment, if Needed.

- Free treatments are available if you test positive for COVID. Free medication prevents hospitalization and is available to most adults and some teens with even mild symptoms.
- Talk to your doctor about treatment options or visit [covid19.ca.gov/treatment](https://covid19.ca.gov/treatment) or find a test to treat location near you: [aspr.hhs.gov/TestToTreat](https://aspr.hhs.gov/TestToTreat). Treatments work best when started right after symptoms begin, and within 5 days of symptoms starting.

Health Officers from the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Francisco, San Mateo, Solano, Sonoma, and the city of Berkeley encourage the



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public to take these easy steps to protect themselves and others from missing holiday moments and to ease the burden on local health systems. Across the Bay Area, respiratory viruses impact the most vulnerable, including young children, the immunocompromised, people living in crowded housing or congregate living facilities, and seniors, especially at skilled nursing facilities.

### **DPH CELEBRATES CBOs SUPPORTING NEIGHBORHOOD COVID SITES**

On December 16, the COVID-19 Taskforce Equity and Community Engagement team, in partnership with the Population Health Division Center for Learning and Innovation, convened a celebration at the Southeast Community Center to honor and celebrate the community-based organizations (CBOs) that have supported COVID-19 Neighborhood Testing and Vaccine sites for the past two-and-a-half years. These CBOs have served the following San Francisco neighborhoods: Bayview Hunters Point, Potrero Hill, Visitacion Valley, Excelsior, Lakeview/OMI, Chinatown, Mission, Western Addition/Fillmore, Tenderloin, and Treasure Island.

Due in large part to the hard work and dedication of the work done by community led efforts, 86% of eligible San Franciscans have completed their vaccine series and 64% have received at least one booster dose, many of whom live in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. We are also happy to share that over 275,000 eligible San Franciscans have received the bivalent booster before the busy holiday season.

These successes did not happen overnight. They are a result of countless hours of coordination, advocacy and outreach that would not have been possible without community leadership, which our partner Community-Based Organizations played a critical role providing.

### **PROGRAM PROVIDING BASIC INCOME TO BLACK PREGNANT WOMEN EXPANDS TO HELP MOTHERS ACROSS THE STATE**

A DPH program that provides monthly income supplements to pregnant Black women to reduce racial health disparities has been awarded \$5 million in state funding to expand the program and provide support to additional families throughout California.

The Abundant Birth Project, a DPH program operated in partnership with Expecting Justice, will launch next year in Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles and Riverside counties and will continue in San Francisco. The program will serve an additional 425 mothers and other birthing parents with grant funding recently announced by the California Department of Social Services.

Research has shown that racism and its related socio-economic inequities are key factors contributing to poor maternal and infant health outcomes. Black women are twice as likely than white women to have a preterm birth and they experience the highest infant and maternal mortality



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rates among any population, in part because of wealth and income disparities. Premature births are the leading cause of newborn deaths and can lead to lifelong health issues, including chronic disease, learning disabilities, and behavioral health issues.

San Francisco was the first in the country to provide supplemental income to high-risk pregnant women when the Abundant Birth Project began in June 2021 to serve pregnant Black and Pacific Islander people. The program provided \$1,000 monthly payments over 12 months to 150 recipients, beginning in early pregnancy, to reduce the racial birth disparities by easing economic stress.

Abundant Birth Project programs beyond San Francisco will provide Black mothers with monthly incomes of \$600 to \$1,000 for 12 months. Expecting Justice is partnering with the Alameda County Public Health Department, the Richmond Rapid Response Fund, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, and the Riverside Community Health Foundation to serve their communities over the next two-to-three years beginning in mid-2023.

The health impacts of the Abundant Birth Project are being studied by the University of California at San Francisco, Berkeley and Davis. The \$5 million grant is among \$25 million in funding that the California Department of Social Services awarded to supplemental income programs this fall.

### **DPH DISTRIBUTED MORE THAN 5,000 HOLIDAY TURKEYS TO COMBAT FOOD INSECURITY**

On December 10<sup>th</sup>, DPH and the San Francisco African American Faith-Based Coalition gave away more than 5,000 turkeys at a holiday food giveaway, as well as health information resources.

More than 50 faith-based and community organizations came to the third annual Feeding 5,000 event to collect turkeys, bags of holiday food, gift cards and health resources to distribute among more than 6,700 San Francisco households this holiday season.

Many San Franciscans, particularly Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities, continue to be affected by the economic impacts of COVID-19 and lack access to healthy foods. Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, one in four San Francisco residents were at risk of hunger due to income shortage, and the [San Francisco Food Security Task Force](#) estimates that the number of people struggling has risen since the onset of the pandemic.

Food insecurity causes stress, trauma, poor diet quality, and malnutrition and is a major contributing



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factor to the widening racial health disparities in low-income BIPOC communities. Food insecurity also increases the risk of multiple chronic conditions, including diabetes, heart disease and hypertension, and exacerbates existing physical and mental health conditions.

The San Francisco African American Faith-Based Coalition is a health and wellness collaborative of more than 21 churches that is committed to advocating for the needs of underserved Black people. Collectively, the members of the Coalition represent more than 6,000 San Franciscans.

The Feeding 5,000 event is a collaborative effort among numerous city departments and community organizations. The event only distributes food and resources through faith-based and community-based organizations; it does not give donations directly to individuals.

## MPX UPDATE

LOCATION	TOTAL CASES AS OF 11/5/22 (probable and confirmed)
San Francisco	841
California	5,622
U.S.	29,646
Worldwide	82,553

## COVID-19 UPDATE

As of December 7:

- San Francisco’s 7-day rolling average of new COVID cases per day is 207 and 114 people are hospitalized, including 12 in the ICU.
- Eighty-six percent of all SF residents have been vaccinated and 64% have received booster dose(s).

## [DPH in the News](#)