



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 August 20, 2024

A current overview of issues affecting the state of public health in San Francisco
<https://sf.gov/departments/san-francisco-health-commission/past-meetings>

In alignment with the California Department of Public Health, we will no longer report on COVID-19 case data. More people are now testing themselves at home for COVID-19 and we do not get data from at-home testing. This affects the accuracy of data on testing volume. We will continue to report on [test positivity](#) and will monitor other indicators including hospitalizations.

ACCIDENTAL DRUG OVERDOSE RATES UPDATE

In July, 39 people in San Francisco died of accidental drug overdoses, according to a report released on Wednesday, August 15 by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. Fentanyl continues to be primary driver in the majority of these deaths. This is approximately 51% fewer overdose deaths than were seen in San Francisco in July 2023, when there were 79. Overall this year, we have 15% fewer deaths than in 2023.

While a reduction in deaths is a hopeful sign, we will continue to double down on our efforts to expand substance use treatment and to get more people into treatment. Later this month is Overdose Awareness Week and International Overdose Awareness Day, a time to remember the lives lost to overdose and to share information about treatment and recovery services that can and do save lives. We, with our partners, are holding events throughout the month of August to raise awareness about overdoses and to promote overdose response training, substance use treatment and other services.

ZSFG PARTNERS WITH MOTHER'S MILK BANK TO HOST MILK DRIVE TO HELP BABIES THRIVE

In recognition of National Breastfeeding Awareness Month, Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital (ZSFG) hosted a Milk Drive on August 14 in partnership with Mother's Milk Bank of California; the first known organized Milk Drive in San Francisco. During the event along Dr. David Sanchez Way on the ZSFG campus, donors dropped off their excess milk donations. The collected



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milk will be pasteurized and shared with babies and families in need in the Bay Area and across the nation. Just two tablespoons of human milk can help a baby in need thrive and just one quarter of an ounce amounts to one feeding in the NICU.

We are grateful to all the donors who donated and to the ZSFG Birth Center for their efforts in making this possible. We also acknowledge and thank Amalia Deck and Catalina Perez, ZSFG's Lactation Nurses, for spearheading and coordinating the event and Jessica O'Rourke and Shilu Ramchand, Nurse Managers and Susan Ehrlich, CEO and Gillian Otway, CNO for their leadership. As a baby-friendly hospital, ZSFG is proud to partner with Mother's Milk Bank to help collect this crucial resource to ensure families and babies in need get the care they deserve.

About Mother's Milk Bank

Mother's Milk Bank is the oldest operating nonprofit milk bank in North America. As a charter member of the Human Milk Banking Association of North America, Mothers' Milk Bank has helped set the industry standard for milk collection and donation. Mothers' Milk Bank serves babies, families, and healthcare providers across the United States.

DPH SPONSORS ASSEMBLY BILL 2115

During the 2024 legislative season, Mayor London N. Breed and DPH sponsored Assembly Bill 2115 with Assemblymember Matt Haney. AB 2115 increases access to methadone by aligning state law with recent federal rules. Expanding access to methadone for vulnerable populations is essential to addressing the overdose crisis and this change would help expand efforts to prevent overdose deaths and further improve access to healthcare for our most vulnerable residents. Methadone is a gold standard medical treatment for opioid use disorder (OUD) and is the most well-studied medication for OUD. People with OUD face multiple barriers to accessing methadone for the treatment, as it can only be dispensed in a limited number of situations. At the federal level, clinics are authorized to provide a 72-hour supply of methadone to a patient while referring a person to an Opioid Treatment Program (aka methadone clinic). Unfortunately, current California law does not fully align with this authority. AB 2115 would address this issue and allow clinics to dispense 72 hours of methadone while referring a person to a methadone clinic. This will increase access to methadone for the treatment of OUD while patients wait to enroll in a methadone clinic, such as on weekends and evenings. The bill has successfully passed through the Assembly and is now in the Senate.



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VISIT TO DPH'S CENTRALIZED CALL CENTER

This month, Dr. Grant Colfax toured the San Francisco Health Network's Centralized Call Center (CCC), which receives more than 1,100 calls a day from patients of the 12 San Francisco Health Network primary care clinics. Answering the phones are 24 full-time Call Agents, who assist patients with scheduling appointments, refilling medications, and getting diagnostic results. Call Agents also route calls from those experiencing urgent medical problems to the nurse advice line. More than 60% of the CCC team members are bilingual, and some are even trilingual, helping callers in their native languages such as Spanish, Tagalog and Cantonese.

The Call Center hours are 8:00am to 6:00pm, Monday through Friday, in alignment with clinic business hours. This fall, a phone system upgrade will be implemented to further enhance patient experience. This technology refresh involves several new applications that will provide tighter integration with EPIC and expanded quality control capabilities.

COVID-19 UPDATE

As of 08/16:

- San Francisco's 7-day rolling average of COVID test positivity is 7.2%.
- Thirty-four percent of SF residents are fully up to date on their COVID vaccinations and have received the updated vaccine.