



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 September 3, 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 August 15 by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. Fentanyl continues to be the 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.

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



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not fully align with this authority. AB 2115 would address this issue and allow clinics and hospitals 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.

DPH HOSTS OVERDOSE AWARENESS EVENTS

The month of August includes Overdose Awareness Week and International Overdose Awareness Day (August 31st), a time to remember the lives lost to overdose and to share information about treatment and recovery services that can and do save lives. DPH and its partners held events throughout the month to raise overdose awareness and to promote overdose response training, substance use treatment and other services to help people addicted to fentanyl and other opioids. ZSFG hosted multiple Overdose Awareness Tabling events. The Richard Fine Health Clinic, OTOP, Bridge Clinic and Addiction Care Team each distributed free fentanyl strips and naloxone, and provided information about resources available for those interested in treatment and recovery and services available throughout DPH.

DPH Community Engagement led a [training event with Lyft](#) at SFO on August 28. More than 90 drivers were trained on how to recognize and respond to an overdose. Trainings were available in English and Spanish. DPH distributed over 95 naloxone kits, overdose response palm cards, and substance use treatment cards.

Extending beyond August, to further improve addiction care, ZSFG's Birth Center partnered with the Addiction Care Team to train six nurses in addiction medicine. They are completing coursework to become Certified Addiction Registered Nurses. This ACT Nurse Liaison Program will be expanded to other hospital units as we aspire to have ACTNLs in every unit to support both our patients and staff.

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



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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 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.

VISIT TO DPH'S CENTRALIZED CALL CENTER

Dr. Grant Colfax recently 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.



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DPH'S CENTER FOR LEARNING AND INNOVATION AND OHE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT LAUNCHES COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE FOR PROMOTORAS

As part of the CDC-funded Project INVEST (Innovations That Value Equity and Strengthen Teams) the Population Health Division's Center for Learning and Innovation and the Office of Health Equity and Community Engagement launched the community of practice for promotoras (community health workers) Spring 2024. On August 21, 2024, they concluded a Leadership Training conducted entirely in Spanish by Dr. Berta Hernandez, with support from community facilitators Abraham Gonzalez, Promotoras Activas SF and Francisco Icala, Instituto Familiar de la Raza, Indigena Health and Wellness. This series of four 3-hour workshops spread out over a four-month period provided a learning opportunity for promotoras and further strengthened our collaborative efforts to address health disparities impacting the Indigenous and Latine community in San Francisco. On the final day, 35 participants received certificates of completion from Asa King, Deputy Director of Community Health.

ZSFG STAFF RECEIVE LEAN AWARD

Craig Verduyze from Moss Adams, our Lean expert consultant, attended the ZSFG Executive Team meeting in August to award Will Huen, MD, MS, MPH and Christopher Ross, MSIE a Level 2 Hoshin Kanri certification representing an advanced understanding and application of the Hoshin Kanri methodology, a strategic planning process that is aligning ZSFG long-term goals with its daily activities. This level of certification indicates proficiency in not only developing and deploying strategic objectives but also in managing the process of cascading these objectives throughout the organization to ensure alignment at all levels.

Will and Chris were recognized for their exceptional skill in identifying key organizational goals, creating actionable plans to achieve them, and monitoring progress through metrics and regular reviews. The award also recognized their work to lead cross-functional teams to solve complex problems using continuous improvement techniques. At ZSFG, these principles have helped enable us to meet our True North goals in many ways, including but not limited to ambulance diversion rates, infection control, hospital-acquired pressure ulcers, and holistically serving our vulnerable patient population.

This certification demonstrates the ability to drive strategic initiatives effectively, ensuring that the hospital remains focused on its long-term vision while also addressing everyday emergencies and



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adapting to changes. Congratulations to both Will and Christopher!

ZSFG WELCOMES NEW CHIEF INTEGRATIVE OFFICER

ZSFG welcomed Angelica Almeida to their Executive Team as Chief Integrative Officer. In this role, she is responsible for overseeing all behavioral health services at ZSFG, including Psychiatric Emergency Services, Psychiatric Inpatient Units, the Behavioral Health Center, and community behavioral health services. She will also serve as a dyad leader with the Chief of Psychiatry. Over the past nine years, Angelica served in several roles with DPH's Behavioral Health Services, most recently as the Director of the Adult and Older Adult System of Care. As a clinical psychologist with an expertise in complex trauma and serious mental illness, Angelica has been instrumental in providing subject matter expertise on court related programs and conservatorship locally and statewide and prioritizes client centered care. We welcome and look forward to having her serve in this critical role in supporting hospital operations and linking behavioral health services within our campus, across the San Francisco Health Network and DPH, and also across the City.

DPH TB CLINIC ARTICLE IN NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL PUBLICATION

An article outlining the methods of collaboration between DPH's TB Clinic, UCSF and Northeast Medical Services, a local Federally Qualified Health Center, to provide TB screening, diagnosis and prevention services effectively and efficiently in the patient's medical home was recently published in a [special Public Health theme issue](#) of *NEJM Catalyst Innovations in Care Delivery*. DPH's Tuberculosis Controller, Dr. Susannah Graves, is the lead author. ["Think. Test. Treat TB" in Action: An Innovative Primary Care and Public Health Partnership to Improve Tuberculosis Prevention and Care](#), has been published in the Volume 5, Issue 8 (August 2024).

COVID-19 UPDATE

As of 08/29:

- San Francisco's 7-day rolling average of COVID test positivity is 5.8%.
- Thirty-four percent of SF residents are fully up to date on their COVID vaccinations and have received the updated vaccine.