



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 November 5, 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.

DPH EXPANDS ON-DEMAND TREATMENT PROGRAM FOR PEOPLE WHO USE FENTANYL

Mayor London N. Breed and DPH announced the expansion of a successful pilot that will now immediately connect individuals who suffer from fentanyl addiction to a medical professional for on-demand buprenorphine prescriptions from 8 a.m. to midnight daily. The pilot program is one component of the City's larger effort to mitigate the impact of the lethal drug fentanyl.

San Francisco is seeing substantially more people enter treatment and access lifesaving medication to curb substance use addiction than last year. As a result of expanded programming and outreach:

- 32% increase in methadone treatment admissions and 46% increase in buprenorphine prescriptions filled at the DPH Behavioral Health Services Pharmacy this year compared to the first eight months of 2023.
- Residential treatment admissions in Fiscal Year 2023-24 also increased 35% over the previous fiscal year.

Additionally, the City's monthly accidental overdose report was released, detailing the sixth consecutive month of decline of fatal overdoses in San Francisco. The City saw an approximate 20% decrease in the first nine months of 2024 compared to the same period of time in 2023, according to the preliminary findings from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.



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San Francisco residents who use fentanyl can now call the DPH Behavioral Health Access Line at 888-246-3333 daily between 8 a.m. and midnight to be connected to a medical provider and receive an immediate prescription for buprenorphine or a referral to a methadone program. Buprenorphine and methadone reduce the risk of overdose death by approximately 50% and support individuals on a path to recovery and health. Navigation support for prescription pick-up and linkages to ongoing treatment and care are also available through this program.

San Francisco became the first county in the state to offer telehealth consultations and immediate buprenorphine prescriptions when the [nighttime on-demand medication treatment access pilot](#) first launched in March 2024. The pilot provided people in the Tenderloin neighborhood telehealth calls with medical professionals between 8 p.m. and midnight for immediate access to medication treatment. This expanded program is the next iteration of the successful pilot and expands on-demand access for medications for fentanyl use disorder to 16-hours per day, 8 a.m. to midnight daily.

Since March 2024, the nighttime on-demand medication treatment access program has facilitated more than 1,650 treatment calls with medical staff, resulting in approximately 40% of clients starting medication treatment for fentanyl use disorder.

DPH will pair interested telehealth clients with a patient navigator to coordinate ongoing treatment and care, including support picking up the initial buprenorphine prescriptions, assistance enrolling in a methadone program, entering residential treatment, and other support services.

DPH makes substance use treatment accessible across its system of care, including in hospitals and 14 primary care clinics, more than 55 specialty clinics, permanent supportive housing, shelters and navigation centers, street-based settings, and the Jail Health program. In recent years, DPH has been aggressively growing substance use treatment options and removing barriers to treatment. The work has included launching new treatment programs, expanding hours at outpatient treatment facilities and access points, adding 400 residential treatment and care beds, and more than tripling the number of street care workers in the community outreaching to people who use drugs.

The DPH Behavioral Health Access Line is a 24/7 call center that serves as a central access point for substance use and mental health services. Now the telephone line adds the option to virtually connect to a medical professional about medications for fentanyl use order.



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DPH RECOGNIZES NATIONAL HEALTHCARE QUALITY WEEK

DPH was proud to host a San Francisco Health Network-wide campaign of activities during National Healthcare Quality Week (October 20-26) to recognize all staff who contribute to delivering exceptional, patient-centered care.

We are all key players in ensuring our patients receive high quality care. Whether a staffer is a clinician directly interacting with patients, a support member ensuring smooth operations, or a dedicated team member behind the scenes working on data analysis and quality initiatives, their efforts matter deeply.

To celebrate our successes and continuous improvement in healthcare quality, we published a wide range of communications including: an appreciation letter from Chief Quality Officer Troy Williams, a feature article in the newly relaunched internal SF Health Network newsletter, team achievement highlights in the Daily Digest for ZSFG and LHH Hospitals, and a social media campaign.

SF Health Network staff also joined the National Association for Healthcare Quality (NAHQ) for a lunchtime learning series to celebrate our collective commitment to excellence.

HALI HAMMER FAMILY HEALTH CENTER SCHOLARSHIP

DPH is pleased to share that the Hali Hammer Family Health Center Scholarship has raised \$5,300 since launching in February 2024. This scholarship is named for former DPH Director of Ambulatory Care, Dr. Hali Hammer, in honor of her legacy of compassionate care and fearless leadership that continues to inspire.

With the funds raised, ZSFG Family Health Center anticipates providing at least 10 scholarships to graduates of John O'Connell High School, where the clinic has had a longstanding partnership. The scholarships will support pathways to health careers for local graduates. This financial support relieves stress and burden on students and their families.

We are excited to see Hali Hammer's legacy be carried forward in those we hope will be future doctors, nurses, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, medical exam assistants, clerks, and eligibility workers at the Family Health Center.



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CELEBRATING OUR HOSPITAL TEAMS IN OCTOBER

There was a lot to celebrate in October! During Physical Therapy Awareness Month and Pharmacy Week, ZSFG shared gratitude with the 35 physical therapists and physical therapy assistants at the Rehab Department as well as all the Pharmacy professionals such as pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, helpers, and support staff—both essential teams who provide invaluable contributions to a patients' recovery.

ZSFG also put a spotlight on a few teams who work behind the scenes but are undeniably vital to hospital operations. During Sterile Processing Week, they recognized the Sterile Processing Department who prepares more than 250,000 surgical instruments and devices needed for surgery and procedures at ZSFG and Laguna Honda Hospitals.

During National Health Care Supply Chain Week, ZSFG recognized the critical role of the hospital's Materials Management team who ensures the hospital has necessary medical supplies, equipment and services to continue to provide quality care. They also joined the Health Network in celebrating Healthcare Quality Management Week, recognizing the teams who help prevent infections and ensures the hospital meets regulatory compliance to provide quality experiences.

Lastly, ZSFG recognized the hospital's Facilities and Engineering teams who care for the infrastructure of the hospital, safeguarding the hospital's ability to respond and provide care during both the patient's next annual checkup and the next emergency or disaster.

ZSFG RAISES BREAST CANCER AWARENESS AT 7TH ANNUAL NOVA WALK

At the 7th Annual Nova12SF walk held on Saturday, October 26, 144 participants joined Avon Breast Center and ZSFG staff on a 12-mile journey across San Francisco, raising nearly \$65,000. The 12-mile walk represents the 12% of women who develop breast cancer and highlights disparities in health care access while building strong community partnerships. The funds raised directly support ZSFG's most vulnerable patients impacted by breast cancer by providing financial assistance for groceries, living expenses, and treatment supplies.

The event kicked off with an opening ceremony in Fort Mason, where the crowd of attendees heard from ZSFG CEO, Dr. Susan Ehrlich, along with patients who have benefited from Nova12 funds. Dr. Judy Luce, who was instrumental in opening the Avon Breast Center in 2004, was



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honored as this year's Nova12SF Grand Marshal. The group was then warmed-up and motivated by Lawanda Dickerson of U3Fit. During the walk, participants enjoyed snacks at the five-mile mark and lunch at the Avon Breast Center. A group of patients joined the walkers for the final three miles from Avon to K.C. Jones Playground in the Bayview, where a group of drummers welcomed everyone to the finish line and Sharmaine 'Star' Quinnine ended the day with a healing circle.

COVID-19 UPDATE

As of 10/31:

- San Francisco's 7-day rolling average of COVID test positivity is 3.8%.
- Twenty-six percent of SF residents are fully up to date on their COVID vaccinations and have received the updated vaccine.