



City and County of San Francisco  
London N. Breed  
Mayor

## Director's Report for Health Commission Meeting of April 19, 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 125,100 San Francisco residents with confirmed cases of COVID-19. And, sadly, a total of 854 San Franciscans have died. The San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH) sends our condolences to their loved ones.*

### **San Franciscans who test positive for COVID and are at high-risk for severe illness are eligible for COVID medicines**

With COVID-19 medicines now more readily available and many people eligible for treatment, DPH is urging people to be prepared by knowing if they are at high risk for severe illness from the virus and how to get timely access to medical care should they test positive.

Most San Franciscans who are [eligible for COVID-19 medicines](#) and test positive should access treatment by going to their health care providers. SFDPH is also helping link people at high risk to health care providers, including those who are uninsured or otherwise disconnected from medical care, regardless of immigration status.

COVID-19 medicines, including oral medicines like Paxlovid, and injectable or intravenous infusion treatments are free to the patient and are proven to reduce the risk of severe illness. Time is of the essence, as some of the medicines, namely those taken by mouth, must be taken within five days of the onset of symptoms.

Currently, under federal and state guidance, a person is eligible for treatment if they test positive for COVID-19 and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Immunocompromised, as they may not have mounted a full response to vaccines
- Over age 65
- Under age 65 and at high risk for a serious illness if they contract COVID-19 because of other medical conditions (see below)
- Unvaccinated, or not up to date on vaccinations (initial two doses and booster, if eligible)
- Pregnant

COVID-19 medications should not be considered a replacement for vaccinations and boosters, which remain the best defense against the worst outcomes of COVID-19, including severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

COVID-19 medicines currently include oral antiviral medicines, Paxlovid and Molnupiravir, and the monoclonal antibody medicine Bebtelovimab. The preventative medicine, Evusheld is reserved for



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patients with the highest risk, such as those who may have an organ transplant and who are taking medications to suppress the immune system. Given potential side effects or interactions with other medicines, people who are eligible for a prescription or referral need to consult a doctor first. For example, Molnupiravir cannot be taken when pregnant or breastfeeding, or when there is a possibility of pregnancy for both women and men.

### How to get medicines

Most San Franciscans who are eligible and test positive should contact their health system or provider. Major health systems in San Francisco are required by local health order to test patients within a day of reporting symptoms and could offer immediate referrals to a doctor for anyone who is eligible for COVID-19 medicine and tests positive.

SFDPH is also providing access to those without coverage through the [San Francisco Health Network \(SFHN\)](#). Some insurance plans, including all San Francisco Medi-Cal plans, have all-hours telehealth access to doctors by phone or video. Additionally, [“Test to Treat” programs](#) are part of a federal initiative that enable patients to test, consult a health care provider, and fill a prescription at the same visit. Several Federally Qualified Health Centers within San Francisco offer this service to their patients, and some San Francisco pharmacies do as well.

### Local supplies available

While oral medications are becoming more widely available, getting them to patients in time for treatment remains a challenge. Health systems and providers are adjusting their operations to deliver COVID-19 medicines to patients more quickly. Meanwhile, recent expansions in eligibility and greater awareness and preparedness among the public will help SFDPH’s efforts to make sure that the weekly allocations of medicines the City receives from the State are well used, and anyone who needs medicine can get it.

In addition, other facilities like select pharmacies are receiving allocations through the federal distribution pathways with more locations are expected to open-up over time. SFDPH will continue to work with providers to allocate medicines efficiently and equitably with a focus on reaching those most vulnerable and in need.

### Resources

More information about therapeutics and access within San Francisco can be found here: [sf.gov/get-treated-covid-19](https://sf.gov/get-treated-covid-19)

A list of federal “Test to Treat” sites in San Francisco can be found here: <https://covid-19-test-to-treat-locator-dhhs.hub.arcgis.com/>

SFDPH’s Covid Resource Center (CRC) can help patients navigate to care options if having trouble contacting a provider. Call the CRC at: 628-652-2700.



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For a list of medical conditions that put people at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19, go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>

### **Laguna Honda continues serving patients while addressing new findings affecting Hospital's Medicare/Medicaid funding**

DPH is committed to continuing to provide quality healthcare to the more than 700 patients at Laguna Honda Hospital and Rehabilitation Center (Laguna Honda) and keep the facility open while it addresses compliance issues raised by state and federal regulators.

The hospital will reapply to the Medicare/Medicaid programs after the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) ended the hospital's participation in the program on Thursday, April 14, 2022. Laguna Honda's state licensure is unaffected by this decision.

Laguna Honda has successfully passed multiple federal and state inspections over many years. CMS's decision to pull funding was triggered by a requirement that the facility resolve all deficiencies by the end of a 6-month time period. That period began in October when state surveyors outlined and documented deficiencies in protocols related to preventing contraband, such as cigarette lighters and drug paraphernalia, on campus.

Importantly, the facility addressed the deficiencies having to do with the contraband. However, in the latest round of surveys this week, the state surveyors identified new issues not previously communicated to Laguna Honda leadership. Regulators found a number of unrelated and technical individual infractions primarily having to do with hand hygiene, documentation, and infection prevention and control, including an instance of a staff member not properly storing a face shield, lack of PPE signage on a unit, and two missed doses of a medication. There was insufficient time to address those deficiencies before CMS's review period ended, and as a result, CMS moved to terminate Laguna Honda from the Medicare/Medicaid program, which funds more than two-thirds of Laguna Honda's services.

The safety and wellbeing of Laguna Honda patients is the top priority, as evidenced by the hospital's exemplary record in managing COVID during these last two years. SFDPH and Laguna Honda take the findings from state and federal regulators very seriously. Laguna Honda has worked with regulatory partners for months on previously identified findings and has already made significant changes at the facility to comply with regulations. Laguna Honda is already appealing some of the underlying citations from the fall that led to the CMS decision and is exploring all other available options while it works with CMS and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH).

*Patients and staff will remain on site, and the facility will remain open* as it reapplies for participation in the Medicare/Medicaid programs and works to come back in compliance. This will enable continuity of patient care at the safety net facility and allow the hospital to continue receiving Medicare/Medicaid program payments that support some of the City's most vulnerable patients who



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are low to extremely-low income and have complex medical and behavioral health needs. It will also ensure Laguna Honda staff have no employment interruption. Payments will continue for at least 30 days during this process, and Laguna Honda will work with CMS to extend the 30 day-payment period.

Changes made since October 2021 include improved processes to quickly identify prohibited items and better prevent such items from entering the Laguna Honda campus; implementing a new front entrance screening process; and safety measures to inspect packages and items brought for patients. Laguna Honda has also updated the tobacco product policy to add additional protections for the safety of patients who engage in outdoor smoking on-campus. Additionally, the facility is implementing new staff trainings; facility-wide safety updates; comprehensive support for patients with substance use disorders; further refinement of screening policies related to patients who leave and return to the hospital on day passes; and improvements to clinical safety searches, admissions, and discharges.

DPH and the Laguna Honda leadership team are confident that the work taking place now will ensure the longevity of Laguna Honda and that the hospital will emerge a stronger organization that can continue to serve San Franciscan's most in-need.

### About Laguna Honda Hospital and Rehabilitation Center

Laguna Honda Hospital, owned and operated by DPH, is a licensed skilled nursing facility serving approximately 700 patients with complex medical needs who are low or extremely low income as part of San Francisco's healthcare safety net. Laguna Honda provides skilled nursing services such as dementia care, other therapeutic services, and rehabilitative therapy such as physical and occupational therapy.

### **DPH announces 204 behavioral health hires**

Over 200 public health staff have been hired to support people who are experiencing homelessness or are marginally housed and have mental health or substance use disorders.

DPH and the Department of Human Resources (DHR) rapidly filled positions and met the goal of hiring and onboarding 200 new employees by the end of March through the 90-day Emergency Declaration in the Tenderloin. Mayor London N. Breed made the emergency declaration in December to address the City's overdose crisis that is concentrated in the Tenderloin neighborhood.

The newly hired public health staff will play critical roles in the City's response to save lives and support people with complex behavioral health needs by providing access to care, treatment, and connections to other needed services.



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Under the emergency powers, DPH and DHR streamlined the City's hiring process while adhering to competitive, fair, and equity-based selection processes. DPH is working to build upon this hiring success and will continue to eliminate redundancies and combine onboarding activities wherever possible.

The new staff include behavioral health clinicians, pharmacists, health workers, and others who will build out effective programs and services that can reach people where they are. A number of these new hires will join the team at the Tenderloin Linkage Center, where people can go to be safe, get basic "dignity" needs met like showers and laundry, and be connected to care and services when they are ready. Other new hires will support the launch and long-term staffing of the Office of Coordinated Care to manage care and improve outcomes for individuals who may otherwise have difficulty maintaining access to services.

Under the [Mental Health SF](#) legislation and funding streams, San Francisco is expanding access to mental health services, substance use treatment, and psychiatric medications to all adult San Franciscans in need who are experiencing homelessness, uninsured, or enrolled in Medi-Cal or Healthy San Francisco.

### **COVID vaccine awareness promotion among SF's Mayan and Indigenous populations**

The Indigena Health & Wellness Collaborative (IHW), a program of Instituto Familiar de la Raza Inc. and DPH are collaborating to increase community vaccine confidence among San Francisco's growing Mayan population. In March, IHW finalized and posted vaccine educational videos in four (4) high prevalence Mayan languages in San Francisco; Tzeltal, K'iche, Mam, and Yucatec. These new video resources may be used by stakeholder groups serving Mayan populations to support language access to COVID-19 information and resources with the intention of increasing vaccination rates within these groups.

### **ZSFG Hospital designated a LGBTQ+ healthcare equity leader**

Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital (ZSFG) received an evaluation of 100 and the designation of "LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader" in the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of the Healthcare Equality Index (HEI), the nation's foremost benchmarking survey of healthcare facilities on policies and practices dedicated to the equitable treatment and inclusion of their LGBTQ+ patients, visitors and employees.

The HEI evaluates and scores healthcare facilities on detailed criteria including Foundational Policies and Training in LGBTQ+ Patient-Centered Care; LGBTQ+ Patient Services and Support; Employee Benefits and Policies; and Patient and Community Engagement. This recognition demonstrates ZSFG's strong and ongoing commitment to providing care to all patients with compassion and respect.



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Thank you to the entire community at ZSFG who made this possible!

[DPH in the News](#)



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## LAGUNA HONDA HOSPITAL AND REHABILITATION CENTER

April 2022

### Health Commission - Director of Health Report

(April 7, 2022 Medical Exec Committee)

	April	(FY 2021-2022) Year-to-Date
<b>New Appointments</b>	1	15
Reinstatements	0	0
<b>Reappointments</b>	7	39
Delinquencies:	0	0
Reappointment Denials:	0	0
<b>Resigned/Retired/Separated</b>	1	12
<b>Disciplinary Actions</b>	0	0
<b>Restriction/Limitation-Privileges</b>	0	0
<b>Deceased</b>	0	1
<b>Changes in Privileges</b>		
Additions	0	0
Voluntary Relinquishments	0	0
Proctorship Completed	2	5
Proctorship Extension	0	0

### Current Statistics – as of 4/05/2022

Active Medical Staff	35
As-Needed Medical Staff	16
External Consultant Medical Staff	46
Courtesy Medical Staff	2



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Affiliated Health Practitioners	7
<b>TOTAL MEMBERS</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>Applications in Process</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Applications Withdrawn this month</b>	<b>0</b>