



San Francisco Department of Public Health

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City and County of San Francisco
London N. Breed
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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*** PRESS RELEASE ***

SAN FRANCISCO SENIORS SHOULD GET COVID-19 BOOSTERS AS HOSPITALIZATIONS OCCURRING AMONG VACCINATED

Only 1 in 5 San Francisco seniors ages 65 and up have received a COVID-19 booster in advance of the busy holiday season

San Francisco, CA — The San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) released new data today showing that seniors are especially vulnerable to hospitalizations from COVID-19, even among those who are fully vaccinated. While the vaccines remain effective at preventing severe illness among fully vaccinated younger people, the data demonstrate the need for people ages 65 and over to get COVID-19 booster shots in advance of the busy holiday season.

Following federal and state guidelines, SFDPH also recommends that other higher risk groups, including people over 50 with underlying medical conditions, get boosters six months or more after their primary series. All Johnson & Johnson recipients should receive a booster two months or more after their dose.

Seniors are of special concern, given that data shows only 1 in 5 eligible San Franciscans ages 65 and older have received a COVID-19 booster, as of October 25. This leaves many of our seniors at risk for hospitalization in the coming months, as increased contact with friends and family during the holiday season gives the virus opportunities to spread.

“This has been such a tough year for many of us, and we want this holiday season to be full of joy and togetherness,” said Dr. Naveena Bobba, SFDPH’s Deputy Director of Health. “Those among us who are at higher risk – including seniors – can easily get a COVID-19 booster to strengthen their immunity and stay healthy. Boosters are now available no matter what vaccine you received initially: Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson. And of course, if you are unvaccinated, we can’t say it enough that it’s imperative you get your vaccine immediately.”

There are an estimated 118,000 seniors in San Francisco who are eligible to receive a booster, and nearly 23,000 of them have done so. An estimated 52,000 boosters have been administered in San Francisco, with less than half going to people over the age of 65 who are at higher risk for hospitalization after a breakthrough infection.

Hospitalization Rates

SFDPH data show that for the entire San Francisco population, unvaccinated individuals are three times more likely to be hospitalized due to COVID-19 than fully vaccinated individuals. In September, there were a total of 79 people hospitalized for COVID-19.



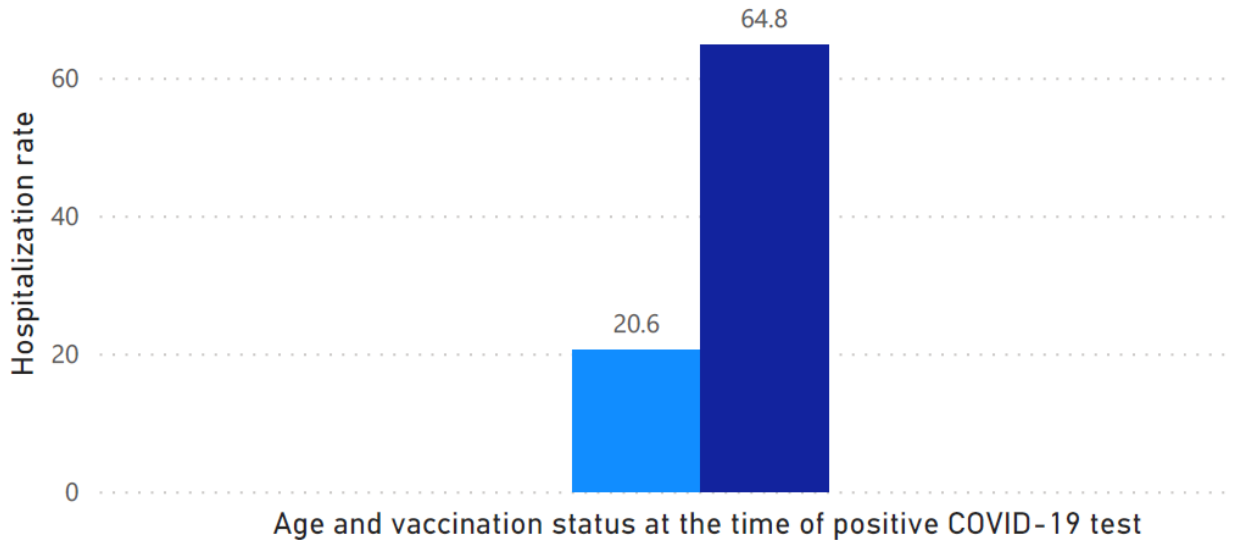
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Hospitalization rate per 1,000 cases from 9/1/2021 through 9/30/2021

● Vaccinated ● Unvaccinated



*The graph above shows the normalized hospitalization rate for the month of September. The hospitalization rate is calculated by dividing the number of hospitalizations by the number of cases and multiplying by 1,000.

However, when broken out by age group the data present a more nuanced picture showing that the older age groups are much more likely to be hospitalized even when they are fully vaccinated.

“Not only are our seniors experiencing waning immunity because they were among the first to get vaccinated nearly a year ago, they are often at higher risk because of underlying medical conditions and co-morbidities,” said Bobba. “This is why we are urging seniors to get there boosters as soon as possible.”



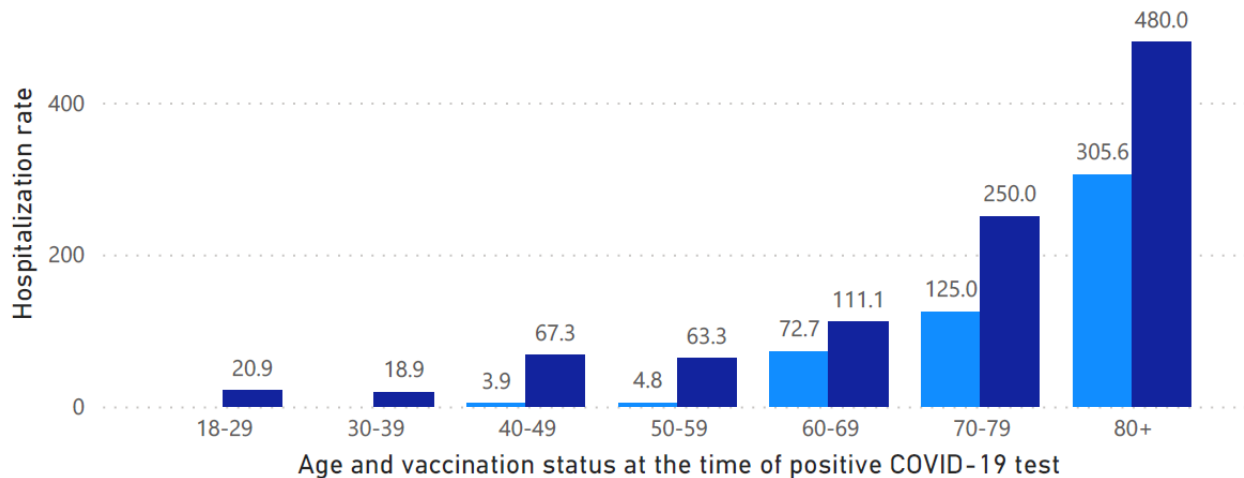
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Hospitalization rate by age group per 1,000 cases from 9/1/2021 through 9/30/2021

● Vaccinated ● Unvaccinated



*The hospitalization rate by age group is calculated by dividing the number of hospitalizations in a particular age group by the number of cases in that age group and multiplying by 1,000.

The data presented are from 79 clinically-verified hospitalizations, meaning in each case a clinician determined that the hospitalization was caused by COVID-19 and not another medical condition.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, in sum through September 30 there have been 16 deaths of fully vaccinated people that are due to complications from COVID-19.

Boosters are widely available across San Francisco's health systems at nearly 100 vaccination sites, most of which allow drop-ins. Caregivers, family members and friends are encouraged to assist seniors in getting to vaccination sites through appointments or drop-in options. Many of these sites also provide influenza vaccines, which can be safely given at the same time as COVID-19 boosters and are also essential this winter. Appointments and drop-in options can be found [here](#).

More information about boosters, can be found [here](#).
SFPDPH dashboards on COVID-19 data can be found [here](#).

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