



San Francisco Department of Public Health

Grant Colfax, MD
Director of Health

City and County of San Francisco
London N. Breed
Mayor

For immediate release

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San Francisco Health Officer Issues Order Restricting Routine Medical Appointments and Elective Procedures Cannabis Dispensaries Encouraged to Use Delivery Method *Further Steps to Slow the Spread of COVID-19 and Prepare the Health Care System*

San Francisco, CA – In order to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus and to free medical capacity for more acute conditions, Dr. Tomas Aragon, the Health Officer of the City & County of San Francisco, ordered today that routine health care appointments be cancelled, postponed or conducted remotely, and that the city's cannabis dispensaries should do everything possible to promote home delivery of cannabis products.

In general, the order ([HO C19-08](#)) puts in place a moratorium on routine medical appointments and elective surgeries, permits counseling and other appointments to occur remotely, and classifies pharmacies and cannabis dispensaries as essential services that may remain open. The order also encourages home delivery of cannabis products versus in-person pick-up.

This order is intended to decompress the health care system, so that hospitals and other providers have more capacity in the event of a surge in patients with COVID-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus.

The order requires that health care appointments that can be reasonably postponed or completed remotely (e.g., by phone or video link) to be addressed in that way; that all healthcare practitioners are ordered to cancel, postpone or reschedule all routine medical appointments, elective surgeries, in-person routine counseling; and that practitioners are ordered to conduct routine appointments remotely when possible. If appointments must be conducted in person, two requirements must be met. First, the practitioner must conduct a screening of the patient for COVID-19 symptoms in advance and, if symptoms are present, the practitioner should consider cancelling the appointment or take proactive steps (e.g., having the patient wear a mask). Second, if the appointment is held, social distancing requirements must be followed.

Travel to and from essential medical appointments and pharmacies and dispensaries is permitted. Pharmacies and cannabis dispensaries are permitted to remain open only for delivery or takeaway and cannabis dispensaries are strongly encouraged to deliver products to clients.

Previously, Aragon issued a Public Health Order requiring that residents stay in their homes, with few exceptions, through April 7, 2020. This order is also designed to protect community health by slowing the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. These are systemic as well as individual changes that will make a difference in people's lives.



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Even people engaged in the essential activities described in the order must practice the following to avoid getting sick and to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- Stay at least 6 feet away from other people when on essential outings such as grocery shopping, riding public transit to an essential job, or walking your dog.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Do not shake hands.
- Keep common spaces clean to help maintain a healthy environment for you and others. Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned regularly with disinfecting sprays, wipes or common household cleaning products.

Stay home altogether if you are sick, 60+ years of age, and/or have certain underlying health conditions. Make sure you have a supply of essential medications for your family. Plan for how you can care for a sick family member without getting sick yourself. Take care of each other and check in by phone with friends, family and neighbors that are vulnerable to serious illness or death if they get COVID-19.

There is no recommendation to wear masks at this time to prevent yourself from getting sick. If you are sick, first call your health care provider; if you must leave your home to seek medical treatment, you may wear a mask or similar personal protective equipment (PPE) to prevent spreading illness to others.

Find the answers to frequently asked questions about the order at [SF.gov/coronavirus](https://www.sfdph.org/coronavirus). The full order can be found here: <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/files/HealthOrderC19-07-%20Shelter-in-Place.pdf>

Other Public Health Orders and recommendations from DPH can be found at [sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus.asp](https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus.asp). Mayoral declarations regarding COVID-19 can be found at [sfmayor.org/mayoral-declarations-regarding-covid-19](https://www.sfmayor.org/mayoral-declarations-regarding-covid-19).

For more information, you can also call 311. For official updates, sign up for the City's alert service: text COVID19SF to 888-777.

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About SF Department of Public Health

The mission of the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) is to protect and promote health and wellbeing for all in San Francisco. SFDPH strives to achieve its mission through the work of two main divisions – the San Francisco Health Network and the Population Health Division. The San Francisco Health Network is a community of top-rated clinics, hospitals and programs that serves more than 100,000 people annually at sites such as Castro Mission, Chinatown, and Southeast health centers, Zuckerberg San Francisco General and Laguna Honda Hospital and Rehabilitation Center. With a broad community focus, the goal of the Population Health Division is to ensure that San Franciscans have optimal health and wellness at every stage of life. To achieve this, the division is comprised of branches dedicated to core public health services, such as health protection and promotion, disease and injury prevention, disaster preparedness and response, and environmental health services.

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