



## 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 3, 2020

*A current overview of issues affecting the state of public health in San Francisco*  
<https://www.sfdph.org/dph/comupg/aboutdph/insideDept/dirRpts/default.asp>

#### **STATE UPDATE:**

#### **Governor Newsom Names Scientific Safety Review Workgroup to Advise State on COVID-19 Vaccines**

On October 19, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom named Dr. Tomás Aragón, the Health Officer of City & County of San Francisco, and Director of the Population Health Division at the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH), as one of the members of a group of the State's **COVID-19 Scientific Safety Review Workgroup**. The Scientific Safety Review Workgroup is a key piece of the state's initial COVID-19 vaccine [distribution plan](#), which was submitted to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on October 16. This working group is composed of nationally acclaimed California physician scientists with expertise in immunization and public health. Along with the State's COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force, the working group will ensure the COVID-19 vaccine meets safety requirements and is distributed and administered equitably.

While there is no proven vaccine for COVID-19 yet, these top health experts – guided by the principles of safety, equity and transparency – will review any vaccine that receives federal approval and verify its safety, before California makes a COVID-19 vaccine available to those most at risk.

SFDPH is honored to have our Health Officer selected by the State to serve as a member of this workgroup to review the safety and efficacy of any vaccine that receives FDA approval for distribution. Dr. Aragón's expertise and contributions will include staying up-to-date with vaccine candidate(s) trials, evidence of safety and efficacy, and other information to independently provide recommendations to California leadership and vaccine planning efforts as well as ensure public confidence in vaccine safety, efficacy, and implementation efforts. Many vaccine candidates are in clinical trials currently, and California is putting a system in place for the distribution and administration of vaccine as supply becomes available.

A safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine is one of the most important interventions to end the COVID-19 pandemic. SFDPH continues working on plans for vaccine distribution and administration as soon as possible, but only after vaccine safety has been reviewed and approved by a panel of top health experts. SFDPH will be transparent, careful, and above all, equitable in efforts to provide a COVID-19 vaccine to everyone in San Francisco who needs and requests vaccination.



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As we have since the beginning of the pandemic, we'll use our lessons learned to inform our ongoing COVID-19 response. Safely and equitably serving San Francisco's vulnerable populations is and will remain a top priority in SFPDH's COVID-19 response, including vaccine distribution.

### **LOCAL UPDATE:**

#### **San Francisco to temporarily pause on expanding activities and businesses reopening**

Today, there are over 12,500 San Francisco residents with confirmed cases of COVID-19. And, sadly, a total of 148 San Franciscans have died. The San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH) sends our condolences to their loved ones.

On October 30, Mayor London N. Breed and Director of Health Dr. Grant Colfax announced the City will temporarily pause reopening of additional businesses and activities scheduled to resume or expand on Tuesday, November 3rd. This pause is due to an increase in COVID-19 case rates and hospitalizations in San Francisco, coupled with the current increase in cases in California and across the United States. San Francisco will continue its strategy of a thoughtful and deliberate reopening, consistent with emerging scientific data, information and evidence, and will move forward in the safest way possible.

This pause is a precautionary measure to ensure San Francisco can continue to reopen safely, to try to help prevent San Francisco from moving backwards under the State blueprint, and to protect community health. Especially with upcoming holidays and events, including Halloween and the election, and people's desire to spend time with their families and travel, it is more important than ever that the City carefully evaluate the data and respond appropriately.

The majority of activities and businesses that were scheduled to reopen or expand their capacity on Tuesday, November 3rd will be paused. These include opening indoor pools, bowling alleys, and locker rooms at fitness centers, and expanding capacity at indoor dining establishments, places of worship, and museums, among other businesses and activities that are allowed only if a county at least reaches the orange tier under the State's blueprint. Businesses and activities that are currently allowed may continue operating at this time. Limited lower risk activities that were planned to move forward on November 3rd (and are not tied to the State's orange tier) will still do so, including expanded filming productions with strict safety protocols, and indoor dining at museums up to 25% capacity. Schools will continue to reopen, with more than 75 schools approved and a handful of high schools approved to open their doors in the next week.

The following activities scheduled to resume on November 3rd will be put on pause:

- Reopening of indoor pools, indoor locker rooms and showers at gyms, and indoor family entertainment activities like bowling alleys.
- Expanding capacity from 25% to 50% (up to 200 people) at indoor restaurants, indoor food courts, movie theaters, museums, zoos, and aquariums, and houses of worship.



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- Expanding capacity at outdoor events from 200 to 300 people at outdoor worship and political protests.

The following activities scheduled to resume on November 3rd, as announced on October 20, will continue:

- Reopening indoor dining at museums at 25% capacity (up to 100 people).
- Expanding outdoor film production from 12 to 25 people with safety protocols and easing restrictions on indoor film production with testing and ventilation requirements or an approved health and safety plan.
- Allowing additional types of outdoor live performances with up to six performers in a drive-in setting.
- Allowing increased real estate showing and open houses with social distancing protocols in place.

Additionally, to continue to operate at 25%, indoor restaurants and personal service providers that deliver services requiring mask removal will need to post signage about what ventilation measures they have put into place.

One of the key indicators of COVID-19 prevalence in the city, the number of new cases per day per 100,000 people, has increased over the last two weeks from a low of 3.14 cases per 100,000 people to 4.17 cases per 100,000 people. The rate of increase in hospitalizations of COVID-19 patients is also a key indicator that affects the pace of reopening. San Francisco recently hit a low of 21 people in the hospital with COVID, but that number has begun to climb again and is now at 37 people.

Despite this recent increase in cases, San Francisco continues to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the community. San Francisco has the lowest death rate of any large city in the U.S. and has the second lowest test positivity rate of any large city. San Francisco leads in testing, with 5,100 average tests per day and more than 664,000 tests conducted to date.

San Franciscans' commitment to preventative measures such as wearing face coverings, social distancing, hand washing, and avoiding gatherings has placed San Francisco in the unique position of effectively managing the virus as the nation faces a third wave of outbreaks. Additionally, San Francisco's COVID-19 response infrastructure that includes testing, contact tracing, and support services have been key to the City's successful management of the virus to date.

The Department of Public Health will monitor the Health Indicators, the risk of specific activities, the estimated reproductive rate of the virus, the regional data and the State's actions in determining when and how to move forward, pause, or dial back reopening. More information about San Francisco's reopening timeline can be found at <https://sf.gov/step-by-step/reopening-san-francisco>.



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### Non-essential Offices

Starting on Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, non-essential offices can reopen at 25% capacity. Offices with fewer than 20 employees can reopen beyond 25%, to the extent that space allows employees to maintain social distancing. Specific ventilation guidelines must be met to the greatest extent possible. Under the new health guidance, employers must conduct a health check of employees each day that they report to the office.

### Reopening of Schools – Ongoing

As state and local COVID-19 indicators permit, San Francisco schools may now resume in-person learning with approved safety plans in place. San Francisco's approach to the [reopening process](#) for San Francisco TK-12 schools (transitional kindergarten through 12th grade) prioritizes the reopening of younger grades for in-person learning. As many as 114 private, parochial or charters schools have requested applications for in-person learning this fall. Almost 92 schools have submitted applications and 56 schools have been approved for reopening. The applications are being reviewed on a rolling basis.

All San Francisco schools must meet minimum standards required by the state and DPH before resuming in-person learning.

Although additional indoor activities are being allowed, it is important to remember that generally outdoor options remain safer because the COVID-19 virus travels in the air and collects indoors. Older adults and those with COVID-19 risk factors should avoid indoor crowds. All San Franciscans must do their part to limit the spread of COVID-19, including face coverings, social distancing, hand washing, and avoiding gatherings.

### **Journal of American Medicine Association publishes first COVID-19 contact tracing peer-review reports by San Francisco**

On November 2, the San Francisco Department of Public Health's contact tracing team published, through the Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA), one of the first peer-reviewed reports of contact tracing outcomes from a local health department in the United States. This research letter reflects data from San Francisco's early shelter in place from April 13 to June 8, 2020.

The data shows that SFDPH's robust and comprehensive COVID-19 contact tracing program had successfully reached greater than 80% of cases and contacts within a median timeframe of 6 days from the onset of their case's symptoms. Approximately 10% of named contacts were newly diagnosed with COVID-19 (compared to 2% positivity during this time period). Household contacts made up approximately 80% of all identified contacts, but 90% of contacts who tested positive lived in the same



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household as the case. Secondary cases (contacts who were found to be newly diagnosed with COVID-19) were traced and quarantined within 6 days of the case's symptom onset.

All in all, SFDPH's experiences and successes shared in this research letter offer a framework and metrics for evaluation. In addition to highlighting the above findings, the report also recognizes the need to further improve outcomes along each step of the contact tracing cascade, to identify ways to increase the number of contacts identified, and to ensure testing for all contacts in order to maximize the number of people newly diagnosed with COVID-19.

### **SF Department of Public Health opens application process for \$5.25M grants for COVID-19 community response**

On October 20, the San Francisco Department of Public Health, in partnership with the San Francisco Public Health Foundation, opened the application process for a \$5.25 million grant program to partner with community-based organizations to provide culturally responsive services to neighborhoods and vulnerable populations most impacted by COVID-19.

As a result, SFDPH has focused this funding application announcement on populations and neighborhoods that have the greatest disparities in COVID-19 cases rates. SFDPH values the expertise of organizations rooted in the community that know how to best serve the diverse populations in the City. During this pandemic, community organizations have supported San Francisco's most vulnerable communities. These organizations are in the unique position to understand the holistic needs of their fellow residents. Trust is crucial to effective COVID-19 outreach, care, and prevention services and to address stigma. Therefore, funding will support community organizations with deep connections to those most impacted by COVID-19 cases to lead the planning and implementation.

This funding announcement is part of SFDPH's comprehensive strategy to provide culturally responsive, and linguistically concordant support for people with COVID-19 positive results. SFDPH is soliciting applications within two distinct service categories to address COVID-19 prevention, mitigation, and wellness services for vulnerable populations at higher risk for acquiring and/or transmitting COVID-19.

Applications can be acquired online at: <https://sfphf.org/covid19grants>. SFDPH will hold an information meeting to review the application process. A Review Panel will be recruited with strict attention to ensuring that no conflict of interest exists related to any member of the panel and the anticipated proposals. For additional questions, please email: [COVID19grants@sfphf.org](mailto:COVID19grants@sfphf.org).

### **Walk & Roll Week**



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In celebration of Walk & Roll Week 2020 (October 26-30, 2020), the San Francisco Department of Public Health's Program on Health, Equity & Sustainability participated through social media with multiple posts across all platforms, to help spread awareness and increase participation. This effort goes hand in hand with DPH's support of Vision Zero, the City's traffic safety initiative, to support one of their key education programs: Safe Routes to School and their annual Walk and Roll Back to School Week event. SFDPH is a co-chair, along with the San Francisco Municipal Transit Agency, of Vision Zero.

Walk and Roll Week is a campaign organized by Walk SF, which is the community leader of Vision Zero, to celebrate getting around in people-powered ways. It takes place the week of October 26 to 30 this year. Normally each October, thousands of kids at schools across San Francisco walk, scoot, and bicycle to school as part of International Walk and Roll to School Day. Because most students are learning remotely this fall, Walk SF has created five days of activities to celebrate. The campaign features a walk and roll passport to encourage kids to bike, scooter, and walk around San Francisco, as well as a walk and roll inspired art contest for students with prizes. Additionally, there are resources for participating schools and classrooms, including prizes for schools/classrooms with the most art contest entries.

### **National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week**

The San Francisco Department of Public Health's Environmental Health Branch celebrated National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week 2020 (NLPPW), October 25-31, 2020, by sending the State's informational posters and brochures to community partners; partaking in the weeklong social media campaign with multiple posts; and discussing the topic at the weekly cultural language media roundtables. The goals were to encourage families to test their children for lead; share preventive tips to protect kids from lead exposure; and encourage remote lead inspections of homes for families with young children and pregnant women.

Lead is a heavy metal which had been commonly used in many manufacturing industries. In San Francisco, about 83% of the residential buildings were built before 1979 and may contain lead-based paint before lead was banned in residential paint and children's product. When the paint of these pre-1979 homes is damaged, people who live there are exposed to lead hazards. About 3.6 million American households have children under 6 years of age who live in homes with lead exposure hazards. According to the CDC, about 500,000 American children between the ages of 1 and 5 years have blood lead levels at or above the CDC blood lead reference value (the level at which #CDC recommends public health actions begin). Lead is especially harmful to young children and pregnant women. Lead poisoning can affect almost every system in the body. This year's message is that "even small amounts of lead can harm a child's health. Ask your child's doctor about a blood lead test."



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### **Tobacco Free Project presents successes and lessons learned from implementing flavored tobacco ordinance**

On October 27, the San Francisco Department of Public Health Tobacco Free Project presented at American Public Health Association (APHA) the program's phased approach to the implementation of the ordinance. Senior Inspector Janine Young and Maryna Spiegel represented the department and Maryna represented the department. The presentation, "Leave No One Behind: Implementing The San Francisco Flavored Tobacco Product Sale Restriction Ordinance" included evaluation from over a year of education and outreach to 801 sites and four community listening sessions. The innovative educational and outreach approach allowed most businesses to come into compliance without the need for enforcement. The APHA session was very well attended with engaged attendees inquiring for more information about DPH's experience with implementing the flavored tobacco restrictions ordinance.

### **DPH in the News**

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SF Chronicle, Nov 1 2020, Is it safe to go home over the holidays? Best practices for Bay Area residents traveling during the pandemic  
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Is-it-safe-to-go-home-over-the-holidays-Best-15690266.php>

ABC7, Oct 30 2020, New data shows how effective contact tracing is across Bay Area  
<https://abc7news.com/contact-tracing-coronavirus-public-health-bay-area/7498644/>

KQED, Oct 30 2020, San Francisco Public Health Director Grant Colfax  
<https://www.kqed.org/forum/2010101880514/san-francisco-public-health-director-grant-colfax>

SF Chronicle, Oct 30 2020, To avoid a surge, San Francisco halts reopening as coronavirus cases and hospitalizations rise  
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/To-avoid-a-surge-San-Francisco-halts-reopening-15688979.php>

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<https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Verily-San-Francisco-Alameda-Oakland-testing-COVID->



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SF Public Press, Oct 28 2020, Nurses in S.F. Department of Health demand thousands of hours in overtime pay  
<https://www.sfpublicpress.org/nurses-in-s-f-department-of-health-demand-thousands-of-hours-in-overtime-pay/>

KNX1070 LA Radio, Oct 27 2020, How San Francisco has maintained successful management of the COVID outbreak  
<https://www.radio.com/knx1070/podcasts/knx-in-depth-809/knx-in-depth-one-week-left-covid-antibodies-research-makes-herd-immunity-an-elusive-goal-debating-rent-control-prop-21-348796358>

KRON4, Oct 27 2020, Dr. Grant Colfax on reopening and low COVID rates  
<https://app.criticalmention.com/app/#clip/view/d659d997-dcd3-4e05-b1a2-1d80a3392804?token=701363f4-61ba-48b1-8e71-50093b99f6fc>

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<https://www.ktvu.com/news/climbing-gyms-among-san-francisco-businesses-now-allowed-to-reopen>

Mission Local, Oct 27 2020, The UCSF researcher who challenged the dogma on HIV treatment, takes on Covid-19  
<https://missionlocal.org/2020/10/the-ucsf-researcher-who-challenged-the-dogma-on-hiv-treatment-takes-on-covid-19/>

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<https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Bay-Area-counties-reopening-more-services-even-as-15679633.php>

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<https://www.sfexaminer.com/news/sf-jail-closure-prompts-doctor-to-call-for-release-of-more-inmates/>

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<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-10-25/san-francisco-slow-coronavirus-reopening>

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<https://missionlocal.org/2020/10/sf-general-hospital-nurses-sue-health-department-for-alleged-wage-theft/>

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<https://www.sfexaminer.com/entertainment/sf-international-arts-festival-wins-health-department-approval-for-weekend-performances/>

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