



## 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 October 20, 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:**

##### **State official reintroduces safe injection site bill**

On October 8, State Senator Scott Wiener convened a news conference in San Francisco, joined by Mayor London Breed and Dr. Grant Colfax, Director of Health, to announce plans to reintroduce legislation as soon as December that would allow safe injection sites (also known as safe consumption or overdose prevention sites) in San Francisco and Oakland. Mayors London Breed and Libby Schaaf expressed their support for this effort. In addition, Dr. Colfax reiterated the San Francisco Department of Public Health's (DPH) longstanding support for medically supervised drug consumption services. The San Francisco AIDS Foundation, HealthRIGHT 360, and other advocates for overdose prevention and the health of people who use drugs also echoed the need for this legislation.

With the powerful opioid fentanyl driving dramatic increases in overdose mortality in San Francisco, San Francisco needs every tool at our disposal to save lives. According to Dr. Phillip Coffin's, Director of Substance Use Research at DPH, [substance use trends 2019 annual report](#), overdose deaths increased 70% from 2018 to 441 San Franciscans in 2019. Preliminary data from the medical examiner indicate that San Francisco has lost more than that – nearly 470 people – in the first eight months of 2020. Drs. Hali Hammer, Judith Martin and Phillip Coffin are leading a San Francisco Department of Public Health initiative to apply new metrics to addressing this crisis, which disproportionately affects Black/African American San Franciscans.

#### **LOCAL UPDATE:**

##### **Health Officials urge everyone to receive a flu shot**

The San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH) strongly recommends that every individual ages six months and older to receive a vaccination for influenza. With COVID-19 and the upcoming flu season overlapping, health officials say it is more important than ever to get vaccinated against influenza this year. Each winter, people sick with flu crowd hospitals and urgent care clinics, resources that may be strained due to COVID-19 this year. The flu vaccine protects everyone's health. When you are vaccinated against flu, you protect yourself and lower the chances of infecting others, including people at high risk of developing potentially serious flu complications.

Flu vaccination is the best protection against influenza. The flu season generally starts in November, peaks in December through February, and remains through April. The flu vaccine provides protection starting approximately two weeks after receiving the vaccine – the time needed for your



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body to develop the antibodies that protect you. It is best to get the vaccine before the end of October, before the flu season begins, but if you cannot access it in October, you should receive it whenever you can to protect yourself during the rest of the flu season.

Flu is not COVID-19. Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. Flu and COVID-19 have similar symptoms including fever, cough, body aches, chills and fatigue. Therefore, this year, people with symptoms of the flu should call their healthcare provider and get tested for COVID-19. After testing, you will need to stay home from work and isolate away from family members while awaiting results.

While flu vaccine is recommended for everyone six months and older, it is especially important for pregnant women, children younger than five, adults 65 and older, and those with chronic medical conditions, such as heart disease, asthma, and diabetes. These individuals are more likely to experience complications from the flu and should contact their health care provider if they develop flu or COVID-19 symptoms. Anyone who is very sick should seek immediate medical attention.

For those with insurance, a flu vaccine is widely available without cost to the patient as a preventive service from their regular doctor or most pharmacies. Call your doctor, clinic or pharmacy to schedule your flu shot in advance. To find a flu vaccine at a location near you, visit the [Vaccine Finder](#).

For those without health insurance, DPH and community clinics will be offering opportunities to get a free flu shot. For more details and a list of San Francisco locations that offer free or low-cost flu vaccinations, visit [www.sfcdep.org/flushots](http://www.sfcdep.org/flushots).

In addition to protecting yourself with a flu vaccine this year, keep your family and community healthy by:

- washing your hands often and thoroughly with soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- wearing a face covering and practicing social distancing.
- covering your cough and sneezes with your elbow or arm.
- avoiding touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- staying home when you are sick.

For more information about influenza or flu vaccine, contact your health care provider or visit [www.sf.gov/flushot](http://www.sf.gov/flushot).

**San Francisco to move forward with reopening of playgrounds**



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Today, there are over 11,900 San Francisco residents with confirmed cases of COVID-19. And, sadly, a total of 133 San Franciscans have died. The San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH) sends our condolences to their loved ones.

On October 14, Mayor London N. Breed, San Francisco Recreation and Park Department General Manager Phil Ginsburg, and Director of Health Dr. Grant Colfax announced the City's outdoor playgrounds are now open. San Francisco's more than 180 public playgrounds will have signs reminding families of capacity limits and other guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Recreation and Park Department monitors will be stationed at the City's busiest playgrounds for the first two weekends of operation to educate families about the new rules and ensure health guidelines are followed.

Playgrounds are reopening with limits on the number of children and adults who can enter based on the size of the playground, and limits on the number of children who can use playground equipment at once. To comply with State regulations, playground visits must be limited to 30 minutes when others are present. Visitors of all ages must stay 6 feet away from non-household members and everyone 2 and older must wear masks. To maximize the number of children who can play, only one adult may accompany each child.

Eating and drinking are not allowed, and visitors should clean their hands before and after playing. Adults must actively supervise children at all times and avoid non-essential cell phone use. If a caregiver must take a break, children should stay by their side until they can resume. Children younger than 2 must remain within arm's reach of a caregiver and are not allowed on play structures that hold more than one child at a time.

The San Francisco Department of Public Health offers families the following tips to play safely:

- Go to the playground during days and times when there are fewer people.
- Choose playgrounds within walking distance of your home instead of taking public transportation.
- Choose smaller playgrounds with fewer people over larger playgrounds that can hold more people.
- If your child is crying and cannot be consoled, remove them from the play structure or playground until they are calm, since loud crying can produce a large number of respiratory droplets.
- If anyone in your household is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, do not visit a playground.

### **Environmental Health provide education to San Francisco essential workers**

In October, the San Francisco Department of Public Health's Environmental Health Branch (EHB) and COVIC Command Center's Community Mitigation Branch (CMB) co-presented to the Board of



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Supervisors regarding their work during the COVID-19 pandemic with essential workers. Specifically, EHB highlighted the outreach, enforcement and overall response to COVID-19 case clusters at food facilities. In addition, CMB shared their outstanding work around contact tracing and their process of identifying COVID clusters in the workplace.

In response to food facility outbreaks, EHB will have a health inspector conduct a facility visit to determine compliance with the Health Orders. During the COVID-19 emergency, EHB has conducted over 2,800 food facility inspections, over 4,750 phone calls to food facility operators, and distributed over 43,300 informational emails along with distributing free barrier masks. Most food facilities have been responsive and corrected any Health Order issues or violations. However, for repeat violators, EHB has partnered with the City Attorney's Office in issuing Cease and Desist orders or suspending permits to operate.

All food facilities for dining, food takeout, or delivery must complete and post a Health and Safety Plan before their operations begin. For restaurant reopening guidance and forms, visit <https://sf.gov/resource/2020/reopening-guidance-restaurants>.

### **San Francisco Department of Public Health will host symposium to promotes drug user health initiatives**

The San Francisco Department of Public Health's Community Health Equity & Promotion Branch (CHEP) was funded to participate as a mentor in the National Association of County and City Health Officers (NACCHO) Overdose Prevention Mentorship project. As part of the project, CHEP will be hosting Drug User Health Symposium 2020 to provide sessions for all participating health jurisdictions to attend. The symposium will provide an opportunity to gather ideas, discuss challenges, and identify specific tools to prevent fatal overdose and otherwise improve the health of people who use drugs in your jurisdiction.

The symposium will be presented virtually October 27-28, 2020. To register for free to the virtual event, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/drug-user-health-symposium-2020-registration-121586547637>.

### **National Disease Intervention Specialists Recognition Day**

National Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) Recognition Day was the first Friday of October. DIS are on the front lines and their skills are more important than ever during the pandemic. DIS include Disease Control Investigators, Health Workers, Case Investigators, Contact Tracers, and Community Outreach Workers. They provide education, link patients to care, identify contacts, and facilitate preventive treatment and control measures to interrupt disease transmission. Disease Intervention Specialists are a critical part of our public health workforce, both as part of the San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH) Disease Prevention and Control Branch and COVID Command Center (CCC).



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This year, we also have Disaster Service Worker staff from outside of DPH, including the Library, City Attorney's Office, Assessor's Office, Public Defenders Office, Office of the Treasurer and Tax Collector and others serving in DIS roles in CCC. Our community partners have their DIS staff working to ensure our COVID-19 response continues to have a patient and community-centered approach.

Thank you to all DIS within and outside of DPH, for their dedication and commitment to serving the health needs of San Francisco residents, workers and visitors, especially given the many challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are very proud to have them promoting and protecting health in San Francisco, and we are grateful for their efforts every day.

### DPH in the News

NPR, Oct 19 2020, Removing cops from behavioral crisis calls: 'We need to change the model'  
<https://www.npr.org/2020/10/19/924146486/removing-cops-from-behavioral-crisis-calls-we-need-to-change-the-model>

Marin Independent Journal, Oct 18 2020, California seeing payoff for virus vigilance  
<https://www.marinij.com/2020/10/18/california-seeing-payoff-for-virus-vigilance/>

Bay City News, Oct 16 2020, Rape: San Francisco develops first-in-the-nation testing  
<https://patch.com/california/san-francisco/rape-san-francisco-develops-first-nation-testing>

SF Chronicle, Oct 16 2020, How will California distribute coronavirus vaccines? Bay Area planning for multiple scenarios  
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/health/article/How-will-California-distribute-coronavirus-15647829.php>

The Counter, Oct 15 2020, Does the American diet make us more vulnerable to COVID-19?  
<https://thecounter.org/does-the-american-diet-make-us-more-vulnerable-to-covid-19/>

SF Chronicle, Oct 15 2020, At least 10 times a day, someone on the brink of death from a drug overdose is saved in S.F.  
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/S-F-s-overdose-numbers-are-staggeringly-high-15648878.php>

SF Chronicle, Oct 15 2020, S.F.'s overdose numbers are staggeringly high. They could have been even higher without Narcan  
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/S-F-s-overdose-numbers-are-staggeringly-high-15648878.php>



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SF Examiner, Oct 15 2020, Breed calls on residents to get their flu shots

<https://www.sfexaminer.com/news/breed-calls-on-residents-to-get-their-flu-shots/>

Bay Area Reporter, Oct 14 2020, Closed for months due to COVID, San Francisco gay sex venue reopens as 'jack-off club'

[https://www.ebar.com/news/latest\\_news///298214/closed-for-months-due-to-covid-san-francisco-gay-sex-venue-reopens-as-jack-off-club](https://www.ebar.com/news/latest_news///298214/closed-for-months-due-to-covid-san-francisco-gay-sex-venue-reopens-as-jack-off-club)

KPIX, Oct 14 2020, COVID reopening: San Francisco allows children to return to city's playgrounds

<https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2020/10/14/covid-reopening-san-francisco-allows-children-to-return-to-citys-playgrounds/>

Next City, Oct 14 2020, San Francisco doula program tackles birth equity and economic justice in one fell swoop

<https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/san-francisco-doula-program-tackles-birth-equity-and-economic-justice>

SF Chronicle, Oct 14 2020, How will California distribute coronavirus vaccines? Bay Area planning for multiple scenarios

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/health/article/How-will-California-distribute-coronavirus-15647829.php>

SF Chronicle, Oct 14 2020, San Francisco is reopening playgrounds. Here's the long list of rules visitors must follow

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/San-Francisco-to-reopen-playgrounds-with-long-15645398.php>

ABC 7, Oct 12 2020, Bay Area parents, teachers, students weigh in on distance learning challenges since start of school

<https://abc7news.com/distance-learning-bay-area-schools-reopening-virtual-zoom/6900731/>

SF Gate, Oct 12 2020, The lack of pandemic safety by diners in San Francisco's Marina District

<https://www.sfgate.com/local/editorspicks/article/Outdoor-dining-marina-san-francisco-covid-15632141.php>

Mission Local, Oct 11 2020, Right to Recover set to improve after initially failing to meet public health goal

<https://missionlocal.org/2020/10/right-to-recover-set-to-improve-second-time-around-after-initially-failing-to-meet-public-health-goals/>



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Bay Area Reporter, Oct 10 2020, Wiener to reintroduce supervised injection bill  
<https://www.ebar.com/news/news//298083>

SF Chronicle, Oct 10 2020, Two deaths a day: S.F. drug overdoses fueled by fentanyl are spiking, figures show  
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/heatherknight/article/Two-deaths-a-day-S-F-drug-overdoses-fueled-by-15635199.php>

Mission Local, Oct 9 2020, More than 450 overdose deaths recorded in SF through August alone  
<https://missionlocal.org/2020/10/overdose-fentanyl-san-francisco-450/>

SF Examiner, Oct 9 2020, Report: Drug overdose deaths in 2020 already surpass 2019's staggering high  
<https://www.sfexaminer.com/news/report-drug-overdose-deaths-in-2020-already-surpass-2019s-staggering-high/>

SFist, Oct 9 2020, SF & Bay Area COVID hospitalizations return to June lows as case counts stabilize  
<https://sfist.com/2020/10/09/sf-bay-area-covid-hospitalizations-return-to-june-lows-as-case-counts-stabilize/>

KCBS, Oct 8 2020, Renewed effort to legalize safe injection sites in the Bay Area  
<https://www.radio.com/kcbsradio/news/local/renewed-effort-to-legalize-safe-injection-sites-in-bay-area>

KPIX, Oct 8 2020, State Sen. Scott Wiener announces renewed push for safe injection sites  
<https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2020/10/08/state-sen-scott-wiener-announces-renewed-push-for-safe-injection-sites/>

SFist, Oct 8 2020, Movie theaters in San Francisco refuse to reopen under city rules banning all concessions  
<https://sfist.com/2020/10/08/movie-theaters-in-san-francisco-wont-reopen-under-city-rules-banning-all-concessions/>

Vox, Oct 8 2020, I'm a contact tracer. Trump's advice not to fear COVID-19 is dangerous.  
<https://www.vox.com/first-person/2020/10/8/21507602/coronavirus-covid-19-trump-contact-tracing>

SF Chronicle, Oct 8 2020, 'This is a public health crisis': New push to allow safe drug use sites in S.F. and Oakland  
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/S-F-and-Oakland-would-be-allowed-to-open-safe-15631845.php>



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SF Examiner, Oct 8 2020, 'Navy Seals of nurses' provide vital care in shelter-in-place hotels

<https://www.sfexaminer.com/news-columnists/navy-seals-of-nurses-provide-vital-care-in-shelter-in-place-hotels/>

SF Examiner, Oct 7 2020, Theaters turn down chance to reopen due to 'insurmountable' restrictions

<https://www.sfexaminer.com/news/theaters-turn-down-chance-to-reopen-due-to-insurmountable-restrictions/>

SF News, Oct 7 2020, Officials ban Halloween parties, discourage trick-or-treating

<https://www.thesfnews.com/officials-ban-halloween-parties-discourage-trick-or-treating/68259>