CONTRA COSTA HEALTH SERVICES

Press Release

More Businesses and Services Can Reopen in Contra Costa Thanks to Improving COVID Situation

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Thanks to recent progress being made in the fight against COVID-19 in Contra Costa, indoor restaurants, gyms, movie theaters, massage businesses and places of worship may now open with restrictions in the county.

The changes come after the county qualified to move into the less restrictive red tier ("substantial") of the state's four-tiered, color-coded reopening system (https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/) today. Contra Costa had been in the state's purple or "widespread" tier, the most restrictive tier.

Moving into the red tier means the following sectors can reopen with modifications:

- Places of worship, restaurants, movie theaters and museums can be operated indoors at 25% capacity or 100 people, whichever is less
- Gyms can reopen indoors at 10% capacity
- All personal care services, including massage, can move indoors
- Indoor shopping malls can operate at 50% maximum occupancy (instead of 25%). Food courts can also open following the state's guidelines for restaurants.
- Indoor retail stores can now operate at 50% capacity (instead of 25%)
- Outdoor playgrounds

"The credit really belongs to the residents of Contra Costa, who have adapted to the new normal and modified their lifestyles to reduce the spread of COVID in the county," said Dr. Chris Farnitano, the county's health officer.

Elementary and secondary schools can reopen for in-person instruction on Oct. 13 if the county remains the red tier for two more weeks. Currently, elementary schools can apply for a waiver from the health officer to reopen.

In order to move into the more permissive red tier, the county had to see average case rates drop below 7 per 100,000 people and testing positivity rates dip below 8%. For the past two weeks, Contra Costa has met those benchmarks. As of Tuesday, the case rate was 6.7 per 100,000 people and the testing positivity rate was 3.7%.

Dr. Farnitano noted that Contra Costa continued to see its COVID numbers improve or remain steady even after the Labor Day weekend, suggesting fewer people engaged in risky behaviors like large social gatherings compared to the previous holiday weekends.

Health officials caution that COVID is still circulating in the community and people should continue to take all the same precautions health officials have been advising for months: wear face coverings in public, maintain physical distancing, wash hands frequently and stay home if you're sick.

In addition, health officials encourage essential workers and people with lots of close contacts outside their own household

to get tested (https://www.coronavirus.cchealth.org/get-tested) for COVID at least monthly.

Businesses and other organizations should review their applicable industry guidance for reopening safely (https://covid19.ca.gov/industry-guidance/) from the state. For more information about COVID-19 in Contra Costa, visit cchealth.org/coronavirus (/coronavirus/).

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