

March 30, 2021
D.4 Covid-19 Update Report

Anna Roth, Health Services Director

Ms. Roth recognized the advocacy both locally but specifically of Congressman Mark DeSaulnier who worked with the government relations team led by Dr. Walker to work with the Federal Government to make sure Contra Costa had all the necessary data entered in order to move quickly on receiving vaccine shipments.

Contra Costa was really quick to act on that when that program was opened. The county was able to take full advantage of the program because it had purchased the ultra low temperature freezers needed to store the Pfizer vaccine., which is a sizable portion of what is being provided by the federal government.

Combining the state and federal supply chains, the first week of March we had about 30,000 doses. The week of March 8th, 44,000 doses came in, March 15th, 45,000 doses and this week, we now have over 84,000 doses.

So, you sort of see a pretty rapid increase which is what we were reporting and we were predicting. The rapid increase of supply that was promised has been arriving. The majority of that being the federal supply coming to our 11 federally qualified health centers. Our community clinics.

In partnership with our county partners, which includes Sutter, Kaiser, pharmacies like CVS and Walgreens, last week we delivered almost 100,000 vaccines in one week. This weekend Contra Costa announced opening for people who are 50 and above to make an appointment, reminding them it is their turn. We had over 17,000 appointments available. Thousands responded, and there are still appointment slots available through cchealth.org. To utilize those spots Health Services is now moving to open up eligibility to anyone in Contra Costa who is living or working in Contra Costa county who is 16 or older starting now. The website has already been updated and the system is receiving one request per second.

To date Contra Costa County has administered over 630,000 doses of vaccine, just over 45% of the population. That is 97% of people 75 and over; 75% of those 65 to 74, and 27% of those 16-49. 44% of Contra Costa residents have now received at least one dose. 25% have both doses. There are still about 375,000 people within the 16-49 that can now register for an appointment.

Access to schedule an appointment is much faster and simpler through the online portal and all are encouraged to use that. Alternatively people can call 1-833-829-2626.

The scheduling system goes out up to seven days. The first group schedule every morning are those the Healthy Places Index indicates are living in the hardest hit communities. The system then refreshes and sets appointments in the high risk categories such as age-based, and so on. While the system is not first-come first-served, it is very efficient with priority codes, refreshed frequently, and will respond to registrants within a few days with an appointment.

In order to remove any barriers, Health Services will begin piloting walk-in clinics to really eliminate the any barriers for those with uncertain schedules. More information on those will be available next week.

Our first pilot sites will be at the Richmond auditorium and the Bay Point clinic, with plans to expand them.

The drive-through site that has opened today is at Hurricane Harbor in Concord. The Governor has asked all the counties in California to be open to schedule vaccination to those 16 and above starting April 15th. We are beginning that today, March 30th. Please schedule through cchealth.org. The state site, MyTurn, is not open to 16-49 yet.

It is expected that the county call center will be overwhelmed this morning and probably the next couple of days. But please don't hesitate to sign up. All are encouraged to use the online features for it's simplicity and time savings.

Gilbert Salinas, Chief Equity Officer

Mr. Salinas was very pleased by the opening to 16 and over, regardless of work status, to simplify the matter of who is eligible greatly. This is eliminating barriers. The more residents vaccinated, the sooner Contra Costa County will reach community immunity. The younger population needs to be vaccinated in order to stop the spread of Covid-19.

Equity efforts have been greatly expanded in our communities by the utilization of mobile vaccine units. Contra Costa is partnering with faith-based organizations and community-based organizations. We have increased from 100 vaccines per clinic to over 300 vaccines per clinic several times a week. Next week we will have a community mobile vaccine clinic that will vaccinate 600 patients at St. Marks Church in Richmond with a goal of reaching 6,000 patients. It is planned to continuously use these efforts to reach our historically marginalized communities. Walk in clinics will begin soon.

The County has hired 19 adult community ambassadors, three program coordinators and one manager to help with outreach by canvassing communities, helping to get residents registered, providing face-to-face education and answering questions from our community. They are out in the community. We felt their impact immediately.

On the data side, we are working with the Information Technology Department to use data to help us identify hotspots, utilizing geomapping. The ambassadors will then canvass the area to provide information on our vaccine sites and provide onsite registration to any clinics in the county. They will be walking around with iPads signing people up and we are utilizing all of our information technology tools to locate and register the unvaccinated.

Dr. Tzvieli, Deputy Public Health Officer

In the time of exciting expansion of vaccine eligibility and doses given, Dr. Tzvieli reminds us not to yet our guard down quite yet. Cases of Covid-19 have actually levelled off and bumped back up a little bit as well as our hospitalization numbers. This week the county sadly received data about a 15-year-old who passed away back in December from COVID-19, the first known pediatric death in our county. While these events are incredibly rare, they are also very tragic. So, it is just one more reminder of how urgently we need to vaccinate our community, reduce cases, reduce transmission and outrace the potential variants that might develop when COVID goes on unchecked.

Contra Costa is expected to move to the orange tier, some time next week, over the weekend or on Wednesday of next week. It depends on when the state reaches the 4 million vaccinations in the lowest HPI quartile. Currently they are at 3.4 million.

We are currently sticking to the state tier guidelines as far as what is open and what's not in every tier. And you could find those on the state website, Blueprint for a Safer Economy. Even when we do get to the orange tier, it is really important that we continue to mask, to socially distance when we are out in public. And when we gather with others, prioritize doing outdoors rather than indoors. Everyone needs to follow the guidelines to hold onto the progress made.

Many states are seeing a rise in cases. The CDC director just yesterday talked about a sense of impending doom and a fourth wave coming. So, we are continuing to stay cautious.

This morning we are opened in Hurricane Harbor (also known as water world drive-through site). This is a joint effort between our own Health Department and Kaiser Permanente. Cars are already there, going through the drive-through site, getting vaccinations. Right now the volume will be around 1,700 a day. By next week, we should be if not twice that, somewhere between 3,000 to 4,000 a day.

It is not that it is a hundred percent reduction in transmission. The first studies showed us that the vaccine is really good at stopping disease. But we weren't sure will you still have some asymptomatic disease and transmit it to others. The next set of studies is coming out and showing the reduction in transmission is really along the same order of magnitude as a reduction in disease. When you have 90% prevention of disease, you are also having the same reduction in transmission, which is fantastic.