

Covid Update

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Randy Sawyer, Deputy Health Services Director, said that surge in the delta variant of Covid-19 virus is being fueled by the unvaccinated. Based on Health Services own data, a person with Covid-19 is 13 times more likely to be hospitalized if they are unvaccinated. He reports a significant uptick in first doses of the vaccine since the implementation of employer-based vaccine mandates and full Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval being given to the Pfizer vaccine.

Health Services believes the pandemic will last for years and expects there will be additional surges and variants. Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) is now preparing for COVID-19 response for the next 5-10 years.

For the 7-day period that ended on August 31st, 15 people in Contra Costa County passed away from Covid-19. This week, September 1-7, preliminary data shows 20 Covid-19 deaths. The county has not had that level of deaths since back in March. And in the interim, the numbers had gone down. May 19-25, 2021 there was a week with only one.

The death numbers are coming up. CCHS is asking people to vaccinate, to wear a mask and supports the schools in all the hard work of contact tracing and identifying cases. CCHS asks everyone to follow the guidances and protect themselves and others

Dr. Ori Tzvieli, Medical Director, Public Health Division, reports a large increase in the demand for Covid testing. CCHS is working with the state to ensure that residents have access to quick, free, dependable testing in all the regions of the county. HS in fact set new records in the past week for number of tests done per day countywide. The results from a county run test takes approximately 48 hours.

The state-run site run in San Pablo opened today, September 7, the Antioch testing site began offering seven days a week 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and the Brentwood site will begin the same expanded hours on 13th of September.

Health Services has requested it's partners John Muir Health and Kaiser Permanente and community clinics to increase their testing capacity as well.

Because CCHS is adding more scheduled appointments, walk-ins slots are available at the three county testing sites which are in Pleasant Hill, Richmond and San Ramon up to 11:30 in the morning.

Wanted to talk about COVID and this long-standing pandemic and all our response to it and all the things we are recommending our community members do. I want to just give the analogy that living with COVID circulating in our community is like driving a car. So, when you get in the car, you always put on your seat belt and with COVID it is the same thing. You wear a mask which is like wearing a seat belt. To keep yourself safer. Cars also have air bags.

In regard to updates on our healthcare guidance, CCHS released a new youth sports and activities guidance to help young people and spectators stay safe when playing field sports and other extracurricular activities. The state has a guidance for sports in K-12 schools.

County guidance is not a legally binding health order, but it is expert advice for how to stay safest while participating in these activities that have so much value to our communities. In addition to what the state

has in their K-12 school sports guidance, CCHS has added recommendations for using face coverings, for vaccination, for COVID-19 testing and also for transportation and hygiene practices. This guidance applies to both school and non-School activities.

Health Services strongly encourages masks for all participants, coaches, staff, volunteers, spectators in outdoor sports.

They are already required for indoor sports. They also recommend parents, including participants, staff, coaches to get COVID testing. Teams who travel outside of the Bay Area should consider following the CDC recommendations for quarantine after travel as well.

CCHS has also updated Contra Costa's health order that requires indoor face gatherings so that performers and public speakers can take their masks off if everyone in the venue is fully vaccinated. This requires the venue operators to require attendees, performers and others to verify they are vaccinated, unless they are under 12. And we also have some extra guidance in there about socially distancing appropriately. If that is the case, the performers can take their masks off if they stay six feet apart from the audience and from other performers. Contra Costa had a more restrictive health order than some of the other Bay Area counties that didn't have this exception. Now that the case numbers are coming down a little bit, HS feels it is safe to make this update for the live theater venues. The updated order is available on our website at Cchealth.org/Coronavirus if anyone wants to check it out.

There is great anticipation for more guidance on booster shots. CCHS is awaiting more details from the Federal Government. At this time, boosters are available only for people who are immunocompromised.

The Federal Government has indicated that likely beginning in the week of September 20th, they will open boosters up to other categories. Most likely will be the elderly, residents of long-term care facilities. It is possible that the latest indications are that it is possible that they will start boosters with people who have gotten the Pfizer vaccine first. They are still evaluating the data on Moderna. That should not be far behind. CCHS does expect to have more information until just before the September 20th date. The committee that is making those recommendations is supposed to meet on the 17th. CCHS will get the message out as soon as it is known.

Almost 100% of the covid virus circulating is the Delta variant. It is evident that for people are getting infected faster with this variant. Now that more is known about this variant CCHS has added a new option for quarantine in Contra Costa County. This option states that if you are in close contact with someone with COVID-19, if you test yourself on day six or after, you can come back. You can end your quarantine as soon as day seven. That is called shortened quarantine.

If you don't get that testing done on day six, if you get it earlier or later, you have to complete the full ten days. But if you get it on day six and it is negative when you get that test result, you can end your quarantine. As long as you are symptom free, obviously. **People who are fully vaccinated don't need to quarantine at all.**

The vaccination rates in Contra Costa are slowly creeping higher. We are still about 1,000 first doses a day countywide. We have vaccination capacity in our vaccine sites. Please get your vaccines.

Schools are working really hard now that the kids are back in the classroom. They are contact tracing. They are identifying cases. They are doing either quarantine or modified quarantine. They are putting forth a concerted effort

Dr. Tzvieli reminds all that CCHS has a mobile vaccine unit. Any business or organization can request a mobile vaccination clinic using an online form if they are in the county and CCHS will send a mobile health van to provide free vaccinations on site within one week after completing the request. They will come back and do second doses three weeks later. He encourages people to take advantage of that.

Gilbert Salinas, Equity Officer, thanked all of the volunteers and the CCHS staff. The medical reserve corps and all of the volunteers that have been showing up every weekend and evening to help support vaccine clinic have provided 96 clinics with 1,100 vaccinations. 3,840 volunteer hours that have been put into this.

In terms of economic impact, it's about \$248,000 that has been saved with our teams here going out into communities.

Gilbert reports that about a third of the hospitalizations in Contra Costa are coming from Antioch. Antioch and other East County cities also have the lowest vaccination rates in the county. For July through September, 80% of our equity strike clinics have been in East County. And 55% of hospitalizations are coming from East County. Clinics stationed in the Sycamore Road area (Antioch) have shown some great success. CCHS will be expanding on that service, to bring service to a farm in Brentwood and a location in downtown Oakley.

Vaccine clinics will be available on September 10th at the Baptist church, September 11th at the Pittsburg car show, on September 12th at Macedonia Mission Baptist Church, September 14th, Knightsen and Bethel Island food pantry, September 16th, Veranda Plaza in Concord, September 17th, we will be at Oakley's Dwelley Family Farms, September 18th, a pop-up clinic will be at Pittsburg arena, pop-up clinic there.

The equity team will continue to bring the vaccine out into the communities. All communities, specifically targeting those communities that have been hardest hit and those that are having the lowest vaccination rates.