



City Manager's

COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE

Friday, September 11, 2020

City Manager Dee Williams-Ridley provided this update on the City of Berkeley's COVID-19 response to the City Council. The reports, which are issued at least weekly, can be viewed at cityofberkeley.info/covid19-city-manager-updates.

EOC work to house the unhoused better prepares us for smoke

Our early and ongoing EOC work to bring medically vulnerable homeless people to safe, indoor shelter shows even greater importance as wildfire smoke envelops our City.

- All of the City funded shelters – Stair Center, Dorothy Day House, Berkeley Food and Housing – are now 24 hour shelters.
- Our EOC worked to establish 18 trailers and rehabilitate a 4-unit house as respite for medically vulnerable homeless people to reduce vulnerability to COVID-19 disease.
- The City worked closely with Alameda County to get two County-run hotels set up in the City. Thanks to significant outreach work by our homeless outreach team and other City staff, the majority of the 69 rooms at the Quality Inn and Rodeway Inn are occupied by people who otherwise were living on the streets, parks and underpasses in Berkeley.

All of those efforts are the result of massive coordination involving staff from many departments, work that is ongoing. Those who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 form a category that directly overlaps with those vulnerable to wildfire smoke.

As you all know, it's a complex effort to convince people who are living outside to come in, even when air quality is poor. Each person now housed to be protected from COVID-19 is another medically vulnerable person now better protected from smoke.

On top of this foundational work, staff have also mobilized to create three days of clean air shelters this week as an additional support. When Dorothy Day House was not able to staff a clean air shelter today, Friday Sept. 11, City staff were taken from other roles to open a clean air shelter at Old City Hall.

The City is making KN95's available for homeless people using the clean air shelter, which will also have water, sanitizer, and we have air purifiers running. The City, alongside our contractors Dorothy Day House, BACS and others have already



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handed out 800 KN95s to unhoused people over the past two weeks. Another 100 were expected to be handed out today.

Communications metrics/achievements

In the face of an unprecedented public health crisis, our 2-person Communications unit changed the way that the City of Berkeley communicates to the public. The goal was to deliver accurate, quick and consistent information to our community to build trust and take the urgent actions needed to keep the virus at bay.

At the heart was the creation of a new role, an EOC Joint Information Center manager, to coordinate, gather and disseminate information internally and externally while also managing and training a number of non-communications staff temporarily reassigned to support COVID-19 communications work. These are the results:

Since March, the team has:

- Sent 96 COVID-19 related community messages to our network of 60,000 subscribers
- Created 34 COVID-19 specific webpages
- Maintained up-to-date information about service impacts on over 250 existing webpages
- Built and maintain a [COVID-19 data dashboard](#) and [weekly indicators status dashboard](#)
- Published over 500 COVID-19 related messages on social media
- Designed over 200 outreach flyers, downloadable signs, and social graphics
- Fielded hundreds of media inquiries
- Shared Spanish-language information on COVID-19 via the web, social media, and through community partners
- Sent 64 all-staff messages related to COVID-19
- Published 55 reports on the City's EOC COVID-19 response, which are available to all community members in an [online archive](#)
- Drafted dozens of targeted messages for distribution to specific groups including the monolingual Spanish-speakers, faith based organizations, and the business community via internal and external partner channels



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- Responded to over 1,400 community questions sent to covid19@cityofberkeley.info

This is just a snapshot of the JIC's work. Although the full reach of the City's COVID-19 communications cannot be measured, we have made over 7 million points of contact with community members on tracked channels, including:

- 1.3 million views of COVID-19 related community messages
- 2.1 million visits to JIC-maintained webpages, including 34 COVID-specific pages and service notices on existing department webpages
- 2.7 million impressions on social media posts related to COVID-19
- 14,000 downloads of [signs on masks and COVID-19 safety](#) we've created for our business community

The demand for information has never been greater. Since March, subscriptions to our [community news mailing list](#) have more than doubled, we've gained over 2,000 new followers on social media, and have seen a 45% increase in visits to the City's website compared to the same period last year.

Bay Area Health Officers' Indicators to Contain COVID-19

Our [COVID-19 indicators weekly dashboard](#) is available 24/7, and it shows detailed information everyone can explore. We are also maintaining these written updates as an official record that's easy to share with the public.

Based on the data available, this is where we stand as of Friday:

Indicator 1: Cases & Hospitalizations Flat or Decreasing

Current status:

- Number of cases identified in Berkeley is increasing. There were 84 new cases reported in the last 14 days
- Number of hospitalized patients in Alameda County has decreased, with 49 fewer people hospitalized for COVID-19 than two weeks ago

Goal not currently met.

Indicator 2: Sufficient Hospital Capacity to meet community needs



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Success criteria: No more than 50% of patients in staffable non-surge hospital beds in Alameda County are COVID-19 positive.

Goal currently met.

Indicator 3: Sufficient Testing Capacity

Success criteria: Sufficient COVID-19 viral detection tests are being conducted each day through private and public sites. The goal for Berkeley is 245 tests per day, giving an effective lens into the workings of the virus in our community.

- Over the last two weeks, an average of 390 tests per day have been reported for Berkeley residents, no matter where they were tested -- private hospitals, labs or our City-coordinated sites.

It is worth noting that air quality has had an impact on testing, affecting all of our sites as well as those throughout the region that Berkeley residents may be using.

Goal currently met.

Indicator 4: Sufficient Disease Containment (case investigation, contact tracing, and isolation/quarantine)

Success criteria:

- 90% of all cases are reached and contacts identified - currently at 82%
- 90% of cases that we reach are isolated safely -- currently at 77%
- 90% of all contacts identified -- currently at 84%
- 90% of identified cases can safely quarantine -- currently at 80%

Disease containment is a critical tool in this phase of the pandemic and reflects significantly increased staffing for contact tracing. This allows us to see how quickly we move to isolate or quarantine people -- essential tasks in limiting the spread.



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As mentioned before, an ongoing concern in disease containment involves multigenerational families living together. It is hard for them to isolate and quarantine when living in shared quarters.

Goals currently not met

Indicator 5: Sufficient Personal Protective Equipment

Success criteria:

- At least 30-day supply of PPE for all health care providers - *Goal Met*
- No hospitals, clinic, skilled nursing facility, other long term care facility, or first responder agency is struggle with obtaining PPE to submit a request for assistance - *Goal Not Met*
- None have needed to submit a resource request for assistance in obtaining PPE to EOC in the last 14 days - *Goal Not Met*

Overall Goal not currently met.

Our ability to meet these indicators can signal progress or, if conditions worsen, could lead to tightening, as we have already seen happen in neighboring counties and across the State.

New Drive-through test site

Curative, Inc, which the City had used for a kiosk-based test site, began a new pilot drive-through COVID-19 testing pilot located at the southeast parking lot of North Berkeley BART.

Appointments and more information can be found in Wednesday's [Community Message](#). This site does not take walk ups, however walk up patients can continue to visit the Optum Test Site in South Berkeley.

Smoke impacts on City Services

Wildfire smoke is having an impact on City services, especially refuse pickup. We put out a [Community Message](#) today letting residents, merchants and others know that this work is being scheduled and prioritized for when air quality is better, typically in the mornings.



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Residents and businesses should be aware of the following impacts:

- Pickup of waste, recycling and compost were stopped on Friday, but will resume Saturday morning, assuming air quality improves. Residents should keep bins out until they are picked up.
- The City's Transfer Station will be closed Friday.
- The Recycling Center, which is operated by a contractor next to the Transfer Station, has also shut down operations for Friday.
- The Berkeley Public Library has suspended curbside pickup.

Resources

CDC Resource: Managing workplace fatigue during COVID-19

The pandemic has touched all aspects of society, including how we work. People providing essential services to the community have been especially stretched thin, working extra shifts and longer hours than usual, leaving less time to sleep and recharge.

Fatigue increases the risk for injury and deteriorating health. While there is no one solution to fit everyone's needs, the CDC provides [strategies that workers and employers can use](#) to manage workplace fatigue and work safely.

Navigating stress management with kids

Even for adults, it can be tough to recognize that what we feel as irritability, difficulty focusing, insomnia or changes in appetite can actually be signs that our bodies are feeling the effects of stress.

Children's brains and bodies are even more vulnerable to the harmful effects of stress than adults and most often, they aren't able recognize or verbalize it. Stress in kids may show up differently than stress in adults. The California Surgeon General's [stress relief playbook for caregivers and kids](#) can help you understand what to look out for and what you can do to protect your family's health. Included in this guide:

- Keeping an eye out for stress in kids.
- Planning tools to reduce stress for kids.
- Strategies for stress reduction.

The guide is also available in [Spanish](#), Chinese ([Simplified](#) and [Traditional](#)), [Tagalog](#), and [Vietnamese](#), [Arabic](#), and [Korean](#).