



City Manager's

COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE

Friday, October 30, 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.

Safely celebrating Halloween

Health Officers throughout the region are concerned about Halloween as a potential source of spread as traditional trick-or-treating carries many behaviors that are high-risk during a pandemic:

- Exchanging objects that bring unrelated households into close proximity to each other
- Costume masks that don't adequately cover mouths and faces
- Social gatherings

While we have been pushing out a regional message about the risks of Halloween, we are also pushing out a Berkeley specific message that includes a message about the elimination of block parties, such as Russell Street, throughout Berkeley.

See [our community message](#) as well as [a parallel Spanish language message](#).

Voting safely, securely and early

This pandemic has required changes in how we vote. As a result, this election is safer and easier than before thanks to a number of steps taken by the state and the county.

Every registered voter was sent a mail ballot, which can be dropped off at a ballot drop box or mailed with a postmark of Nov. 3 or earlier. In addition, the county has created 100 voting centers, nine of which are in Berkeley, where people can register and vote in-person in a physically distanced way over four days.

To help explain all of what's needed to vote, we've created a guide full of resources that provides information on a number of related issues, including same-day registration, ranked choice voting, ballot drop box locations and more.

You can see and help spread [our community message](#).



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Path emerges for Middle and High Schools to open

Cases and positivity rates -- the two metrics the state uses to assess which tier of activities are permitted in particular counties -- have continued to decline.

In [Alameda County as a whole](#), there are 3.2 new cases per 100,000 people, and the positivity rate is 1.6 percent. The City of Berkeley's per 100,000 rates are 1.56 new cases per day and 0.24 percent positivity, respectively.

The result is that both City Health Officer Lisa B. Hernandez and County Health Officer Nicholas Moss have prioritized the re-opening of schools for the next phase in the pandemic.

Science and data guide the decision. Yet, there are also practical realities to make this happen. To do what we can to support schools, Berkeley Public Health has:

- Expanded the availability of systematic testing to teachers and staff through facilitated partnerships (e.g. coordinating a relationship between BUSD and Curative, Inc.)
- Created a 6-part disease prevention training for schools.
- The first training in this series took place this afternoon and was hosted by a Berkeley Public Health Nurse.
- Required Public Health site visits
- Provided continued technical assistance via virtual engagement, including two Q&A sessions with teachers and staff.

Schools also have been using county, state, and federal guidance to prepare to reopen in-person.

Starting the week of November 9, middle and high schools (grades, 6-12) that complete, post and distribute a COVID-19 health and safety reopening plan will be permitted to open if ready. The decision and timing of when to open rests with each school and school district. Parents and guardians should contact their schools directly regarding their plans.

As Dr. Hernandez said in [our community message](#), "COVID-19 remains a threat, but we use science and data to navigate the path forward and balance risks. The data showing low community spread has to be weighed against the very real socio-emotional and educational risks children are facing."



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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:

There were 45 new cases reported in the last 14 days -- eleven fewer cases than we reported in last week's status update.

There was a total of 1 new patient in Alameda County hospitalized for COVID-19 than two weeks ago

Goal currently not met.

Indicator 2: Sufficient Hospital Capacity to meet community needs

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 761 tests per day have been reported for Berkeley residents, no matter where they were tested -- private hospitals, labs or our City-coordinated sites.

Goal currently met.



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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 84%
- 90% of cases that we reach are isolated safely -- currently at 81%
- 90% of all contacts identified -- currently at 84%
- 90% of identified cases can safely quarantine -- currently at 79%

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.

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.

Testing & Disease Containment



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Our testing sites continue to test at a high rate, creating a public health infrastructure that is critical for navigating the complexities of life in a pandemic.

Last week, Curative tested an average of 244 people per day, approximately 55% of whom were Berkeley residents.

Curative continues to have open appointments, however make sure to check the website ahead of time for an up-to-date schedule and appointment slots. Certain days are appointment only, and walk-ins may not be accepted.

The state-funded Optum test site at the Martin Luther King Jr. Youth Services Center continues to be fully booked. Last week, Optum tested an average of 138 people per day, approximately 56 percent of whom were Berkeley residents.

The state accepted the Disease Containment Branch's proposal to continue using State-deployed Contact Tracers and Case Investigators -- giving the City an important resource to provide quick turnaround contact tracing and case investigation services. This is particularly important whenever COVID-19 cases and outbreaks emerge Berkeley.

All of the City's information about testing services can be found at www.cityofberkeley.info/get-tested.

Support to the Unhoused

This week, Berkeley Food and Housing Project on-boarded 3 new clients into the Berkeley Respite Program and moved into trailers at 1281 University and 701 Harrison.

The Safer Ground hotels continue to operate and the team is working closely with Alameda County's Abode to be able to provide rapid rehousing resources ahead of the Safer Ground program conclusion at the end of the calendar year.

Lifelong Medical will begin providing flu shots at Berkeley encampments over the next couple of weeks.