



# COVID-19 UPDATES IN SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

**JULY 2, 2020**

## **COVID-19 Trends**

Overall, San Bernardino County (SBC) continues to see a rise in both new COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations. The data suggests that the rise in cases is due to community spread in the context of re-opening, combined with family gatherings, holidays, and protests, as opposed to specific outbreaks, as was the case earlier in the pandemic. The County, along with the Hospital Association of Southern California, is developing a major COVID-19 marketing campaign around testing, responsibility, and protecting others as early as June 26 to increase public awareness. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is also closely monitoring all California county COVID-19 infection rates, hospitalizations, and surge capacity. The Governor implemented a mandatory mask order June 18 in response to increasing rates of COVID-19 infection throughout the state. Please see the Re-opening section below for details about closure of certain business sectors in response to increasing COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations.

## **Contact Tracing**

SBC Department of Public Health (DPH) has been increasing staffing to meet the need for case investigation and contact tracing. Fifty-one new staff have begun work with the County to conduct case investigation and contact tracing. Twenty-four staff were also deployed from CDPH to do only contact tracing for the County starting this week. DPH has an additional 25 new hires scheduled to start on July 6. This is in addition to our 11 experienced Communicable Disease Investigators already serving to protect our residents from communicable disease, who have been assigned to outbreak response, continuity of operations, and providing guidance and leadership to our new staff.

## **Data**

The SBC COVID-19 dashboard is being updated with additional skilled nursing facilities (SNF) metrics as well as disparities data and information on how the county is performing on the metrics CDPH is monitoring as a part of reopening. The new dashboard information is expected to be available in the next couple of weeks. [Click here to see the SBC COVID-19 dashboard.](#)

## **Skilled Nursing Facilities**

DPH continues to work with the County Nursing Facilities Task Force, which includes SBC DPH, SBC Behavioral Health, Arrowhead Regional Medical Center (ARMC), other County agencies, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Inland Empire Health Plan, and other emergency management and hospital stakeholders. The purpose of the task force is to support facilities as they develop and implement their COVID-19 mitigation plans and aim to complete baseline testing of all residents and staff by June 30 as required by CDPH.

## Testing

The County continues to increase testing in both community and health care settings. A letter from DPH was sent to SNFs on June 16 stating that in order to preserve the ability of DPH to address outbreaks and as directed by CDPH, SNFs are required to have a relationship with one or more laboratories to process COVID-19 PCR tests. Although DPH recognizes the burden of baseline and routine/surveillance testing of SNF residents and employees, the DPH Laboratory does not have the capacity to accommodate SNF baseline and surveillance testing for COVID-19 at this time.

For baseline and routine COVID-19 testing needs, facilities need to seek other resources, such as commercial laboratories. DPH is continuing to work with the SNFs to identify testing resources, in collaboration with the County Nursing Facilities Task Force and other partners.

This week, DPH has started to assist the county jails to test about 150 people per day who are booked into the county jails and inmates who are being transferred to the state prisons.

SBC is offering community testing at various indoor sites in all five districts of the county. OptumServe, in partnership with CDPH, is also offering testing at three sites throughout the county. Multiple clinics and hospitals throughout the county are also offering testing, including the SBC Health Centers and ARMC.

To view all COVID-19 testing sites in the county, [click here](#).

## Remdesivir

On July 7, SBC is planning to receive its sixth and final allocation of the remdesivir that Gilead donated to the state. As with the previous shipments, this shipment will be distributed based on the number of hospitalized patients with confirmed COVID-19. Gilead is actively discussing with the federal government the future mechanism for remdesivir access. Beginning in July (after the donated supply of remdesivir has been allocated), hospitals will be charged no more than the Wholesale Acquisition Price (WAC) for remdesivir. Gilead has announced that the WAC is \$520 per vial, adding up to \$3,120 for a five-day treatment course. The federal government with input from state governments will continue to direct the allocation of remdesivir supply from July to September. Hospitals will receive the product shipped directly from AmerisourceBergen instead of from the MHOACs. Details on the distribution process are posted on the CDPH [website](#).

DPH released a health advisory on the DPH and ICEMA process for distribution of remdesivir, as well as guidance on remdesivir allocation, use, and reporting which was sent to hospitals. [Click here to see the health advisory](#).

## County Data Monitoring

CDPH is monitoring metrics to track elevated disease transmission (case rate >25/100,000 over the past 14 days, and testing positivity >8% (7 day average with a 7 day lag), increasing hospitalization (>10% increase in 3 day average COVID+ hospitalized patients), and limited hospital capacity (<20% ICU beds available or <25% ventilators available). SBC has been placed on the [State's County Data Monitoring](#) list since June 21st due to elevated disease transmission and increasing hospitalization. Please see the website below. DPH has been engaging with the State and local partners on strategies to help address and improve these metrics.

## Re-opening

As stated above, SBC has been on the [State's County Data Monitoring](#) list due to elevated disease transmission and limited hospital capacity for the past 11 days. On July 1, Governor Gavin Newsom and CDPH released [guidance](#) directing counties that have been on the County Monitoring List for three consecutive days or more to close indoor operations for certain sectors which promote the mixing of populations beyond households and make adherence to physical distancing and wearing face coverings difficult. The guidance applies for a minimum of three weeks and is subject to an extension based on epidemiologic indicators. These sectors may modify operations to provide services outside or by pick-up. In addition, all brewpubs, breweries, bars, and pubs in these counties must close immediately, both indoor and outdoor.

Given California's vast geographic diversity, many counties have attested to epidemiological readiness and overall preparedness and are able to move at their own pace through the reopening process depending on local conditions. California provides guidance on how local jurisdictions should modify operations to reduce risk for infection should the local jurisdiction decide to reopen a specific sector. Local officials in [counties with attestations](#) determine when specific sectors of their economy that have state guidance posted will reopen. It is up to the local health officers to make decisions regarding reopening specific sectors based upon the epidemiology and readiness of the county.

On May 23, the State approved [San Bernardino County's COVID-19 County Variance Attestation Form](#), which allows the County to move more quickly through Stage 2 of modifying the State's [Stay-at-Home order](#).

To ensure that the County reopens safely, the County established a comprehensive [COVID-19 Containment Plan](#) to monitor the presence of the virus and to identify a threshold to initiate a response if needed.

[Click here](#) to find more information on guidance for the sectors that have been allowed to open.

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<sup>i</sup> Open Letter from Gilead, June 29, 2020. Accessed June 29, 2020. <https://stories.gilead.com/articles/an-open-letter-from-daniel-oday-june-29>