



## CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

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**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council      **DATE:** January 25, 2021  
**FROM:** Matthew Bronson City Manager  
**PREPARED BY:** Matthew Bronson, City Manager  
**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Response Update

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

Receive an update on the countywide and City response to the COVID-19 pandemic including business assistance programs.

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### **BACKGROUND**

The City continues its work in addressing the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic following the direction of the County Public Health Department in coordination with other local agencies. The following is an update on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic in the county as well as the City's continued response since the last regular Council meeting on January 11.

#### **Countywide Status**

As of January 20, San Luis Obispo County has 16,056 confirmed COVID-19 cases with 45 current hospitalizations (10 in the ICU) and 2,398 individuals at home and 13,429 individuals recovered (approximately 83%). This is a 31% increase in the number of cases in the past two weeks and a 15% increase in the number of hospitalizations. These trends track with increased case numbers in surrounding counties including Monterey (36,126), Santa Barbara (25,083), Kern (86,718), and Kings (12,415). Approximately 36% (5,923) of the confirmed cases in this county are in North County with 3,163 in Paso Robles and 2,760 in Atascadero, Templeton, and elsewhere. Approximately 33% (5,401) of cases are in the central part of the county with the vast majority (2,855) in San Luis Obispo. In South County, there has been a total of 3,774 confirmed cases (approximately 23% of countywide cases) with 1,146 in Arroyo Grande, 1,136 in Nipomo, 685 in Grover Beach, 552 in Oceano, and 254 in Pismo Beach. On a South County comparison, case numbers in Grover Beach per 1,000 residents (50.7) continue to be lower than Arroyo Grande (63.7) and Oceano (76.7) though higher than Pismo Beach (30.9) though all these per capita numbers are still higher than two weeks ago. Over the past two weeks, there has been a 32% increase in cases in Grover Beach.

As previous staff reports highlight, the State uses an overall approach called the *Blueprint for a Safer Economy* to determine what businesses can and cannot open safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the *Blueprint*, every county in the state is assigned to a tier based on its test positivity and adjusted case rate and counties are moved to less or more restrictive tiers based on changing metrics including a "health equity" metric that also must be met to move to a less restrictive tier. Table 1 on the following page shows the four tiers of the *Blueprint* approach and the metrics used to determine placement:

County risk level	Adjusted case rate* 7-day average of daily COVID-19 cases per 100K with 7-day lag, adjusted for number of tests performed	Positivity rate** 7-day average of all COVID-19 tests performed that are positive	
		Entire county	Health equity quartile
<p><b>WIDESPREAD</b></p> <p>Many non-essential indoor business operations are closed</p>	<p><b>More than 7.0</b> Daily new cases (per 100k)</p>	<p><b>More than 8.0%</b> Positive tests</p>	
<p><b>SUBSTANTIAL</b></p> <p>Some non-essential indoor business operations are closed</p>	<p><b>4.0 – 7.0</b> Daily new cases (per 100k)</p>	<p><b>5.0 – 8.0%</b> Positive tests</p>	<p><b>5.3 – 8.0%</b> Positive tests</p>
<p><b>MODERATE</b></p> <p>Some indoor business operations are open with modifications</p>	<p><b>1.0 – 3.9</b> Daily new cases (per 100k)</p>	<p><b>2.0 – 4.9%</b> Positive tests</p>	<p><b>2.2 – 5.2%</b> Positive tests</p>
<p><b>MINIMAL</b></p> <p>Most indoor business operations are open with modifications</p>	<p><b>Less than 1.0</b> Daily new cases (per 100k)</p>	<p><b>Less than 2.0%</b> Positive tests</p>	<p><b>Less than 2.2%</b> Positive tests</p>

San Luis Obispo County is technically in the “purple” or “Widespread” tier based on the *Blueprint* though the county is under the State’s Regional Stay Home Order (Regional Order) shown in Attachment 1 as part of a Southern California region based on ICU capacity of less than 15%. The order puts further restrictions on private gatherings, closes many business sectors except for critical infrastructure and retail, requires 100% masking and physical distancing in all others, and places significant restrictions on other sectors such as only allowing takeout and delivery for restaurants. Attachment 2 includes a listing of these closures and restrictions. The original order for the Southern California region remained in effect for three weeks until December 28 but was extended without a defined date given ICU capacity and projections based on the State’s ICU methodology. Additional information is available through the State’s website at <https://covid19.ca.gov/> or at the County’s website at <https://www.readyslo.org/en/index.aspx#>. The City joined other cities in the county to support a request from San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties for the State to create a separate “Central Coast” region for the purpose of tracking ICU capacity and related restrictions given the mutual aid connections between the three counties, but the State has not agreed to this request.

The City continues to monitor these trends carefully in conjunction with the County and other local agencies and carry out compliance work to protect public health and safety. County Public Health continues to serve as the lead agency countywide with referral of specific compliance complaints to the City to ensure that businesses comply with State guidance. The City is committed to helping achieve community compliance with State and local orders focused on education and awareness with enforcement action as a last resort if other steps are not successful. Businesses in the city

overall are complying with the public health requirements including adherence to the State's order mandating face coverings usage indoors. The City has issued citations to four businesses after initial warnings and violation letters did not achieve compliance but has successfully achieved compliance with these businesses. This compliance work is important to helping our community meet the public health thresholds for greater reopening of businesses and activities.

Lastly, the County is working diligently on a countywide distribution of a vaccine which is key to ending this pandemic. The County in total has received a 17,010 vaccine doses including more than 7,000 second doses that are being administered along with the initial doses. As of January 15, County Public Health has administered over 6,266 doses and has been vaccinating five days a week at a site in San Luis Obispo and Paso Robles. Starting on January 25, a third site in Arroyo Grande will open to offer greater accessible for South County residents. Residents 75 years of age or older are now able to sign up for a vaccine appointment on the County's website at [COVID-19 Vaccines in SLO County - San Luis Obispo County \(recoverslo.org\)](https://www.recover.slo.org). County Public Health is working with the County's Incident Management Team (which includes Fire Chief Lieberman) to assist in standing up these regional vaccination clinics to accommodate the number of vaccinations needed. These clinics are projected to be used for up to six months with the staffing and logistical costs anticipated to be provided by individual cities and the County to help staff this historic vaccination effort with funding assistance from the state or federal government. Staff is working with other cities and the County in preparing a related assistance agreement that would be brought to the Council for approval on February 9, 2021.

### **Business Assistance Update**

This continues to be a very difficult situation for our entire community particularly local businesses which have experienced significant financial challenges from previous and current restrictions. The City has demonstrated a strong level of support for our business community through expediting permits, allowing for greater outside business use, and providing direct funding assistance in partnership with the South County Chambers of Commerce (Chamber). On January 11, the Council authorized staff to proceed with the next phase of business assistance using \$150,000 in remaining General Fund funding of the \$500,000 previously committed in City funds for this purpose to provide additional support for our local businesses. This assistance included a fourth and likely final round of microgrant assistance for local businesses of up to \$5,000 that have not received previous microgrant assistance from the City and have been impacted by COVID-related restrictions. Applications were received by January 19 and reviewed by a City-Chamber review panel which approved grant awards to 21 eligible businesses for a total of \$100,000 in funding assistance. These checks have been distributed to the recipients and are critical to help businesses pay employees as well as rent and other operating costs during this difficult time.

This business assistance also includes a "buy local" program to encourage customer spending by providing a \$20 gift card to a local business for spending \$100 at one or more local retailers or restaurants within Grover Beach. Such a program is currently in place in San Luis Obispo and can provide further economic stimulus to local businesses through additional customer spending. Customers will need to submit their receipts from retailers or restaurants to the Chamber to choose a gift card from a local business that wants to participate in the gift card program. The Chamber will administer this program with City funding used in purchasing the gift cards over time from participating businesses. The program is anticipated to begin in early February and last for 2-3 months. Similar to the microgrant program, eligible businesses must adhere to State and local public health requirements and hold a current Business Tax Certificate with the City.

## **City Response Update**

The City continues to provide services to our community in accordance with statewide orders and public health guidelines though City facilities including City Hall and Community Centers remain closed to public access. City employees work predominantly remotely in accordance with public health guidance on offices while continuing to provide services for the public. The public can call the City's main telephone line at (805) 473-4550 or send an email to [cityhall@groverbeach.org](mailto:cityhall@groverbeach.org) to ask questions or get more information about the City's response or services during this time. City playgrounds along with sports courts and the skate park remaining open though users need to follow public health requirements. At this time, there is no timeframe for resuming public access to City facilities including the public counter at City Hall and walk-in visits to the Community Center along with in-person Council and Commission meetings as public health guidance will inform the timeframe for safe public access.

The City continues to not hold in-person events following the cancellation of last year's summer concert series and only carrying out virtual holiday events. The City is planning for resumption of events later this year starting with the summer concert series, but the exact timing is undetermined given the timing of the vaccine distribution and related ability to safely hold large-scale community gatherings again.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

The Council has the following alternatives to consider:

1. Receive an update on the countywide and City response to the COVID-19 pandemic including business assistance programs; or
2. Provide alternative direction to staff.

## **PUBLIC NOTIFICATION**

The agenda was posted in accordance with the Brown Act.

## **Attachments**

1. Regional Stay Home Order Text
2. Regional Stay Home Order Closures and Restrictions



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*Acting Director*  
 ERICA S. PAN, MD,MPH  
*Acting State Health Officer*

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency  
**California Department of Public Health**



GAVIN NEWSOM  
*Governor*

**Regional Stay At Home Order**  
**12/03/2020**

Upon assessment of the recent, unprecedented rise in the rate of increase in COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and test positivity rates across California, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is taking immediate actions to prevent the spread of the virus.

The State, like the nation, continues to record an unprecedented surge in the level of community spread of COVID-19. California implemented an accelerated application of the Blueprint Framework metrics on November 16 and a limited Stay at Home Order issued on November 19. However, in the interim, the number of new cases per day has increased by over 112%, (from 8,743 to 18,588) and the rate of rise of new cases per day continues to increase dramatically. The number of new hospital admissions has increased from 777 on November 15, to 1,651 on December 2, and because of the lag between case identification and hospitalizations, we can only expect these numbers to increase.

Current projections show that without additional intervention to slow the spread of COVID-19, the number of available adult Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds in the State of California will be at capacity in mid-December. This is a sign that the rate of rise in cases, if it continues, is at risk of overwhelming the ability of California hospitals to deliver healthcare to its residents suffering from COVID-19 and from other illnesses requiring hospital care. ICU beds are a critical resource for individuals who need the most advanced support and care and the ability to add additional ICU capacity is limited by the lack of available ICU nurses and physicians as a result of the nationwide surge in hospitalizations and ICU admissions.

Because the rate of increases in new cases continues to escalate and threatens to overwhelm the state's hospital system, further aggressive action is necessary to respond to the quickly evolving situation. While vaccines are promising future interventions, they are not available to address the immediate risks to healthcare delivery in the current surge. The immediate aggressive institution of additional non-pharmaceutical public health interventions is critical to avoid further overwhelming hospitals and to prevent the need to ration care.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, as Acting State Public Health Officer of the State of California, order:**

1. CDPH will evaluate public health based on Regions, responsive to hospital capacity for persons resident in those Regions.
2. CDPH will evaluate the adult ICU bed capacity for each Region and identify on [covid19.ca.gov](https://covid19.ca.gov) any Regions for which that capacity is less than 15%. When that capacity is less than 15%, the following terms (the Terms of this Order) will apply.
  - a. All gatherings with members of other households are prohibited in the Region except as expressly permitted herein.
  - b. All individuals living in the Region shall stay home or at their place of residence except as necessary to conduct activities associated with the operation, maintenance, or usage of critical infrastructure,<sup>1</sup> as required by law, or as specifically permitted in this order.
  - c. [Worship](#) and [political expression](#) are permitted outdoors, consistent with existing guidance for those activities.
  - d. Critical infrastructure sectors may operate and must continue to modify operations pursuant to the [applicable sector guidance](#).
  - e. [Guidance](#) related to schools remain in effect and unchanged. Accordingly, when this Order takes effect in a Region, schools that have previously reopened for in-person instruction may remain open, and schools may continue to bring students back for in-person instruction under the [Elementary School Waiver Process](#) or [Cohorting Guidance](#).
  - f. In order to reduce congestion and the resulting increase in risk of transmission of COVID-19 in critical infrastructure retailers, all retailers may operate indoors at no more than 20% capacity and must follow the [guidance for retailers](#). All access to retail must be strictly metered to ensure compliance with the limit on capacity. The sale of food, beverages, and alcohol for in-store consumption is prohibited.
  - g. To promote and protect the physical and mental well-being of people in California, outdoor recreation facilities may continue to operate. Those facilities may not sell food or drink for on-site consumption. Overnight stays at

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://covid19.ca.gov/essential-workforce/> for full list of California's Critical Infrastructure workforce.





9. When operative in a Region, the Terms of this Order supersede any conflicting terms in other CDPH orders, directives, or guidance. Specifically, for those Regions with ICU bed capacity triggering this order, the Terms of this Order shall supersede the State's [Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#) and all guidance (other than guidance for critical infrastructure sectors) during the operative period. In all Regions that are not subject to the restrictions in this order, the [Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#) and all guidance shall remain in effect.
  
10. This order is issued pursuant to Health and Safety Code sections 120125, 120130(c), 120135, 120140, 120145, 120175, 120195 and 131080; EO N-60-20, N-25-20, and other authority provided for under the Emergency Services Act; and other applicable law.



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Erica S. Pan, MD, MPH  
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California Department of Public Health



## Rev 12/3/20

The Regional Stay Home Order would be in effect for 3 weeks after the trigger and instructs Californians to stay at home as much as possible to limit the mixing with other households that can lead to COVID-19 spread. It allows access to (and travel for) critical services and allows outdoor activities to preserve Californians' physical and mental health. This limited closure will help stop the surge and prevent overwhelming regional ICU capacity.

In any region that triggers a Regional Stay Home Order because it drops below 15% ICU capacity, the following sectors must close:

- Indoor and outdoor playgrounds
- Indoor recreational facilities
- Hair salons and barbershops
- Personal care services
- Museums, zoos, and aquariums
- Movie theaters
- Wineries
- Bars, breweries, and distilleries
- Family entertainment centers
- Cardrooms and satellite wagering
- [Limited services](#)
- Live audience sports
- Amusement parks

The following sectors will have additional modifications in addition to 100% masking and physical distancing:

- **Outdoor recreational facilities:** Allow outdoor operation only without any food, drink or alcohol sales. Additionally, overnight stays at campgrounds will not be permitted.
- **Retail:** Allow indoor operation at 20% capacity with entrance metering and no eating or drinking in the stores. Additionally, special hours should be instituted for seniors and others with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems.
- **Shopping centers:** Allow indoor operation at 20% capacity with entrance metering and no eating or drinking in the stores. Additionally, special hours should be instituted for seniors and others with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems.
- **Hotels and lodging:** Allow to open for critical infrastructure support only.
- **Restaurants:** Allow only for take-out, pick-up, or delivery.
- **Offices:** Allow remote only except for critical infrastructure sectors where remote working is not possible.
- **Places of worship and political expression:** Allow outdoor services only.
- **Entertainment production including professional sports:** Allow operation without live audiences. Additionally, testing protocol and "bubbles" are highly encouraged.

The following sectors are allowed to remain open when a remote option is not possible with appropriate infectious disease preventative measures including 100% masking and physical distancing:

- Critical infrastructure
- Schools
- Non-urgent medical and dental care
- Child care and pre-K