

San Bernardino County reports 753 new COVID-19 cases, 4 more deaths Tuesday

By Amaray D. Alvarez Palm Springs Desert Sun

Posted Jun 30, 2020 at 5:13 PM

San Bernardino County health officials confirmed more than 750 new cases of COVID-19 and four additional deaths on Tuesday.

The 753-case increase marks the county's highest single-day increase of confirmed cases since testing began in late March. The county's previous largest increase came June 23 when 649 new cases were reported.

"A large amount of data was entered into the database as a result of a backlog of cases over the past several days," the county's COVID-19 dashboard said. "This caused a spike in the number of new cases."

The county has now reported a total of 12,550 cases and 253 deaths.

The cases are broken down by age as follows, according to health officials:

- 639 cases are among people ages 0 to 14
- 467 cases are among people ages 15-19
- 2,454 cases are among people ages 20-29
- 2,416 cases are among people ages 30-39
- 2,208 cases are among people ages 40-49
- 1,989 cases are among people ages 50-59
- 1,295 cases are among people ages 60-69
- 1,072 cases are among people older than 70
- The ages for 10 cases are unknown.

An additional 6,720 tests were conducted in the past 24 hours officials reported Tuesday, bringing the county's total number of tests to 139,704. The county met and exceeded its target goal of conducting 3,288 tests, or more, Tuesday.

An estimated 9% of people in the county who have been tested have tested positive.

As of Sunday, when the county last reported, there were 376 COVID-19 patients hospitalized, a 6.5% increase from the previous day. Thirty-six of the county's 1,106 surge capacity beds are currently in use. The county projects that 6,961 people have recovered from COVID-19.

In the High Desert, Victorville added 30 cases on Tuesday, and Hesperia added 24 cases and a third death, the data shows. In Apple Valley, 11 cases were added, while three were added in Barstow.

Cases in the High Desert totaled 1,438 on Tuesday. The vast majority of those — 1,269, or 88.2% — were in Victorville, Hesperia, Adelanto, Apple Valley and Barstow.

Victorville has amassed the highest number of deaths in the High Desert, with eight. Adelanto has recorded four deaths, and Apple Valley and Barstow have two each.

Combined, the Victor Valley's four cities and Barstow have 19 of the High Desert's 23 COVID-19-related deaths. The other deaths are in Joshua Tree (2), Oak Hills (1) and Yucca Valley (1).

Here is the list of cases and deaths in the High Desert. Changes are in parentheses:

- **Adelanto:** 171 cases (+7), 4 deaths
- **Apple Valley:** 177 cases (+11), 2 deaths
- **Barstow:** 60 cases (+3), 2 deaths
- **Fort Irwin:** 2 cases
- **Hesperia:** 334 cases (+24), 3 deaths (+1)
- **Joshua Tree:** 19 cases (+1), 2 deaths
- **Morongo Valley:** 8 cases
- **Oak Hills:** 43 cases (+2), 1 death
- **Phelan:** 43 cases (+3)
- **Twentynine Palms:** 14 cases (+1)
- **Victorville:** 527 cases (+30), 8 deaths
- **Yucca Valley:** 40 cases (+1), 1 death

Here is the list of cases and deaths in mountain communities:

- **Big Bear City:** 6 cases (+1)
- **Big Bear Lake:** 9 cases (+2)
- **Blue Jay:** 1 death
- **Crestline:** 21 cases (+1), 2 deaths
- **Rimforest:** 1 case
- **Running Springs:** 7 cases
- **Wrightwood:** 2 case
- **Total:** 46 cases, 3 deaths

In other Southern California counties as of Tuesday afternoon: Imperial, 6,242 cases, 93 deaths and 5,342 recoveries; Kern, 4,655 cases, 70 deaths and 3,307 recoveries; Los Angeles, 103,529 cases, 3,369 deaths; Orange, 13,843 cases, 340 deaths and 7,423 recoveries; Riverside, 17,296 cases, 457 deaths and 7,854 recoveries; Santa Barbara, 2,896 cases, 29 deaths and 2,292 recoveries; San Diego County, 13,832 cases, 361 deaths; San Luis Obispo, 611 cases, 1 death; and Ventura County, 2,740 cases, 45 deaths and 1,654 recoveries.

Southern California's total as of Tuesday was 178,194 cases — not all of which are active — and 5,018 deaths, according to the data compiled.

Across California, 230,914 people have tested positive, with 6,077 deaths, according to the Los Angeles Times' coronavirus tracker.

Records for cases have been shattered in recent days, according to the Times. Over the past week, the state has averaged 5,557 new cases and 60.1 new deaths per day.

Hospitalizations are creeping up, as well. Patient counts are climbing in 13 counties, threatening a goal of the stay-at-home policies, the Times reported.

Testing has also increased. Over the last seven days, about 96,000 tests have been conducted per day, exceeding the governor's goal of 60,000.

Nationwide, well over 2.6 million people are confirmed with 127,322 deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University data. A total of 720,631 have recovered.

Worldwide, cases stood at nearly 10.4 million on Tuesday. There have been 508,445 deaths and more than 5.3 million recoveries associated with the virus, according to the data.

Daily Press City Editor Matthew Cabe contributed to this report.

Amaray Alvarez is an intern at The Desert Sun. You may reach her at amaray.alvarez@desertsun.com.



LOCAL NEWS • News

San Bernardino County to order bars closed if coronavirus cases don't improve by Friday





Bartender Shani Khan of San Bernardino wears a mask and gloves as she works behind the bar at the Red Fox Bar and Grill in San Bernardino on Thursday, June 11, 2020. Bars could be ordered to shut if coronavirus numbers in San Bernardino County don't improve. (File photo by Terry Pierson, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)

By **SANDRA EMERSON** | semerson@scng.com |

PUBLISHED: June 30, 2020 at 6:51 p.m. | UPDATED: July 1, 2020 at 12:21 a.m.

San Bernardino County supervisors directed the public health officer to order bars, breweries and brewpubs to close on Friday, July 3, if the county's coronavirus data doesn't improve by then.

After nearly three hours discussing options, the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday afternoon, June 30, agreed to watch their numbers for a couple more days before acting on a state recommendation that these businesses close to slow recent increases in coronavirus cases and hospitalizations.

While it's unlikely San Bernardino County will fall off the state's watch list Friday, the delay gives it more time to work with businesses. County officials also anticipate more guidance from Gov. Gavin Newsom on Wednesday, July 1.

Supervisors also directed county staff to create a program to help cities educate higher-risk

businesses on the need for safety precautions and ways to enforce those guidelines.

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On Sunday, June 28, the state ordered seven counties, including Los Angeles, Kern and Imperial counties, to close brewpubs, breweries, bars and pubs after being on the watch list for at least 14 days.

The state recommended counties on the list for a shorter period of time, including San Bernardino and Riverside counties, close bars and similar businesses unless they offer sit-down, dine-in, meals. Alcohol can be sold with a meal. Riverside County's public health officer issued an order that took effect Tuesday.

Counties make the list when their positivity rate, the percentage of tests that come back positive, is higher than 8% over seven days.

As of Monday, June 29, the county's rate was 11.2%, Corwin Porter, San Bernardino County's interim public health director, said.

The state also looks for greater than a 10% increase in hospitalizations over a rolling three-day period. As of Monday, that was 10.3% in the county, Porter said.

San Bernardino County had been on the state's list for nine days, but is expected to hit the 14-day mark Sunday, July 5, if cases and hospitalizations continue to trend upward.

About 170 businesses could be effected by such an order, including 98 that are true bars and nightclubs, said Luther Snoke, interim director of the county's special districts department.

Supervisors were concerned that, if they do nothing and the state orders the businesses to close, they will be closed much longer than if the county kept local control.

"None of my mayors, or myself, like that idea but it's better than being under the thumb of the state," Supervisor Janice Rutherford said. She and Vice Chair Josie Gonzales supported calling for the closure Tuesday.

There is also the risk of losing state funding if the state deems the county to be uncooperative, Gary McBride, county's chief executive officer, said.

Bars and breweries were allowed to reopen June 12 as part of the state's third stage of its four-phase plan. The state has recommended they close again because they're social environments where groups of people mix and alcohol consumption reduces inhibitions and impairs judgment, making people less likely to follow guidelines. People may also yell over loud music, sending more respiratory droplets into the air.

It is also difficult to trace the contacts of a sick person in a bar setting, officials said.

Board Chairman Curt Hagman said it's hard to tie the increases to the bars without data to support that. He suggested the county be more proactive in reaching out to businesses to ensure they're following health guidelines and educate residents on the need to wear face coverings and social distance.

The county's COVID Compliant Business Partnership program gives businesses a grant and window sign letting customers know they are taking safety precautions to slow the spread of the virus in their establishment. But, not enough businesses are taking advantage of the program, Hagman said.

Hagman also said that businesses can start selling some food with alcohol to get around the order, as some have been. Residents can still drink in restaurants where they are in closer proximity to friends and family at tables than they are sitting 6 feet apart at bars.

He was hesitant to shut down an entire industry when it might not actually lower the county's numbers.

"Personally, I don't think too many businesses will be shut down because of this," Hagman said. "There's so many loopholes in the state order that will allow them to stay open if they serve food along with alcohol, but it does send a very strong symbolic message that we can go backward if our numbers keep going up."

Josh Hamilton, a former In-N-Out employee, turned the Hamilton Family Brewery in Rancho Cucamonga into a drive-thru during the shutdown this spring.

"We had cars line up a whole city block," he said. "There's been some days when it was the busiest days in the company's history, when it was just my wife and I."

Still, it wasn't the same.

"Our motto here is 'love people, love beer,' so we've just been excited by having it some form of open," Hamilton said. "It doesn't feel like a brewery unless you have people in it."

Staff Writer Beau Yarbrough contributed to this report.

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San Quentin Prison Was Free of the Virus. One Decision Fueled an Outbreak.

The virus arrived in San Quentin after busloads of prisoners were transferred from another facility where infections were rising. What happened is a warning for the nation's prisons, experts say.

By Timothy Williams and Rebecca Griesbach

June 30, 2020 Updated 4:45 p.m. ET

The coughing and complaints of sickness began as a procession of busloads of prisoners made its way late last month from a Southern California prison to San Quentin, California's oldest and most widely known prison, perched on a bluff overlooking San Francisco Bay, not far from the Golden Gate Bridge.

The inmates were being moved to San Quentin as part of a plan to halt the spread of the coronavirus by reducing the number of inmates at the California Institution for Men in Chino, where nine inmates had died and nearly 700 had been infected.

At the time, there were no inmates known to have had the virus at San Quentin.

Within days, some of the 121 prisoners from the buses introduced the virus at San Quentin, public health officials say. More than 1,000 of the 3,700 prisoners have since been infected at San Quentin, the foreboding structure surrounded by barbed wire fences and dotted with guard towers that was once famously home to inmates including Charles Manson; Sirhan Sirhan, who assassinated Robert F. Kennedy; and George Jackson, an inmate who wrote "Soledad Brother," a series of letters from prison.

The transfer of inmates — an effort intended to slow the virus, which instead apparently created a new outbreak — has been denounced by health officials and a state lawmaker as a public health failure. How San Quentin went from being a prison that had held off the virus for months to a place inundated with sick inmates represents a cautionary tale for the nation's prison system amid the pandemic.

"What happened — what's happening — it can really happen anywhere, particularly in an overcrowded prison, which unfortunately is the norm," said Dr. David Sears, a physician and professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, who toured San Quentin on June 13 and warned state officials about the emerging crisis. "San Quentin's not the first prison to have a large outbreak, and unfortunately it won't be the last."

Days into the outbreak, the prison has grown increasingly chaotic, inmates and others say. Some among San Quentin's death row inmates, in a secluded part of the prison, are infected, according to advocates for inmates. A number of older prisoners have hung handwritten signs outside their cells that read "Immune Compromised" so that guards will wear masks around them. Other inmates refuse to leave their cells out of fear of catching the virus, according to an inmate, and in recent days, guards have been heard screaming over their radios, "Man down!" after sickened inmates were unable to stand up.

The conversation has been dominated by talk of death.

"I don't want to see them die," Rahsaan Thomas, a 49-year-old inmate said of some of the older prisoners in a telephone interview. "I don't know if I'm tough enough to survive Covid."

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation said in a statement that it was very concerned about the surge in infections in San Quentin, adding that prison workers had increased testing among inmates and had limited the number of transfers between prisons.

"Public safety is our top priority, as is the health of our community," said Dana Simas, a spokeswoman for the agency. Workers had begun to build "air-conditioned tent structures" at the San Quentin prison, she said, as officials work to determine the best use of spaces for housing and medical triage.

Broadly, Ms. Simas said that California officials were confident that they could halt the spread of the virus given that the prison system had longstanding plans for managing other outbreaks of influenza, norovirus, measles and mumps.

A hearing is scheduled on Wednesday in the State Senate, where lawmakers say they have become alarmed about the outbreak and what they describe as a haphazard response by prison officials.

Across the United States, the number of prison and jail inmates known to be infected has doubled during the past month to more than 80,000, according to a New York Times database. Prison deaths tied to the coronavirus have also risen significantly, by nearly 30 percent since mid-May. Nine of the 10 largest known clusters of the virus in the United States are inside correctional institutions, The Times's data shows.

In California prisons, the number of cases has risen by nearly 200 percent and deaths by 144 percent during the past month.



San Quentin opened in 1852, and is at 117 percent of its capacity, according to state data. As many as half of all inmates suffer from health conditions that make them especially vulnerable to the virus. Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

Public health officials in California and elsewhere have been bracing for months for what they say was inevitable — the spreading of the coronavirus in correctional facilities, which possess unique vulnerabilities.

Most jails and prisons were designed to focus on security. Ventilation is often poor and access to health care is inconsistent. Prison health care in California has historically been so substandard that health services are administered by a federal receiver.

California prisons have required everyone to wear masks, but social distancing policies and mask-wearing rules among prison guards are nearly impossible to enforce. Longstanding prohibitions on cleaning supplies that contain bleach or alcohol have made it difficult for crowded facilities like San Quentin to meet even basic sanitary standards given that hundreds of inmates share a limited number of toilets, telephones and shower stalls.

Since the pandemic, California has agreed to release as many as 3,500 inmates up to six months early and is considering more early releases, but the prison system remains at 124 percent of capacity, according to state records.

Public health experts said deficiencies were made worse at San Quentin. The prison is dominated by row after row of barred cells. Paint peels from walls, state work orders show, and puddles form after rain showers because the ceilings leak.

The prison opened in 1852, and is at 117 percent of its capacity, according to state data. As many as half of all inmates suffer from health conditions that make them especially vulnerable to the virus.

“There’s no way to address a public health problem when you need to isolate people but your system is bursting at the seams,” said Adamu Chan, a San Quentin inmate.

Dr. Brie Williams, a physician and professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, and director of the university’s Criminal Justice & Health Program, said absent a coronavirus vaccine, prisons were outmatched, despite their plans for managing other sorts of outbreaks.

“The difference with this infection is that with all of those other conditions we were able to essentially, eventually throw money at them in the way of fancy medications,” she said.

Dr. Matt Willis, the top public health official in Marin County, where San Quentin is, said state prison officials had told him they were capable of handling the virus on their own.

The county’s health department was told by state prison leaders “very clearly that this is not part of our jurisdiction,” Dr. Willis said. The corrections system, he said, has a “lot of control over every aspect of their processes” and has not been transparent about their handling of the virus.

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Common symptoms include fever, a dry cough, fatigue and difficulty breathing or shortness of breath. Some of these symptoms overlap with those of the flu, making detection difficult, but runny noses and stuffy sinuses are less common. The C.D.C. has also added chills, muscle pain, sore throat, headache and a new loss of the sense of taste or smell as symptoms to look out for. Most people fall ill five to seven days after exposure, but symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as many as 14 days.

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“It may work in certain settings,” he added, “but when you have a complex disaster that’s moving quickly, I think we’re finding that the process is just not matching our needs.”

San Quentin’s crisis began with a handful of decisions that were made as officials were trying to quell the outbreak in Chino, interviews with inmates, correctional officers, elected officials and health experts show.

On May 30, the inmates from Chino boarded buses for San Quentin after being told they were being transferred to reduce overcrowding, which would protect vulnerable inmates at the prison they were leaving, the California Institution for Men.

Each of the 121 inmates who boarded the buses had been tested at various points over the previous several months, but few — if any — had been tested during the previous three weeks, prison officials have acknowledged.

Arriving at San Quentin, prisoners’ temperatures were taken and they were placed in a holding area, but no Covid-19 tests were given.

For days, the men used the same showers and ate in the same dining hall as other San Quentin inmates.

It took only days, data from the prison system shows, for the virus to make its way through the prison, where hundreds of inmates sleep in bunk beds within a few inches of one another in a crowded dormitory that was once a gymnasium. In other parts of the prison, men are paired inside 4-by-9 foot cells.

Over the past week, the prison has conducted mass testing. So far, more than half the inmates tested have seen positive results, state data shows.

The virus has spread so rapidly and there is so little unoccupied space left at the sprawling prison that some infected inmates have been placed in small isolation cells where, in normal times, death row inmates are sent for punishment.

Marion Wickerd got a call last week from her husband Tommy Wickerd, 53, an inmate in San Quentin.

“He said, ‘People are dropping right and left in front of me, but I’m OK,’” Ms. Wickerd said.

A few hours later, though, he called back. He had tested positive. She said she had not spoken to him in several days.

“All I know is that my husband is not dead because no one has called to tell me that,” she said. “Worried? You bet. Scared? You bet.”

Reporting was contributed by Brendon Derr, Danya Issawi, Ann Hinga Klein, Savannah Redl and Maura Turcotte.

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LOCAL NEWS

SoCal to Las Vegas train project gets approval to build along 15 Freeway



Posted: Jun 30, 2020 / 06:11 PM PDT / Updated: Jun 30, 2020 / 06:11 PM PDT

A plan to build a high-speed train between Southern California and Las Vegas got a boost Tuesday after the rail company in charge of the project received permission to build along Interstate 15.

XpressWest entered into a lease agreement with the California Department of Transportation to construct the rail line on I-15's median, Caltrans announced in a news release.

Approximately 135 miles of the 170-mile rail system will be in California.

The project will be privately financed and will cost about \$7 billion, according to 2018 estimates.

It expects to first complete a link between Las Vegas and Victorville, California, with plans to eventually extend the line another 80 miles (130 kilometers) to Los Angeles.

The project stalled several times over the past decade, mostly over financing.

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THINGS TO DO CASINOS

San Manuel Casino prohibits indoor smoking, limits alcohol service





In this Monday, June 15, 2020 file photo, black Jack dealer Denise Lazos waits for players as she stands behind barrier of plexiglass during the public reopening of San Manuel Casino in Highland. San Manuel recently announced that it was temporarily disallowing smoking inside and limiting drink service to slot machines and table games. (File photo by Watchara Phomicinda, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)

By **ALEX GROVES** | agroves@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise

PUBLISHED: June 30, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. | UPDATED: June 30, 2020 at 11:48 a.m.



San Manuel Casino announced that it was temporarily prohibiting smoking indoors and limiting alcohol service only to people playing at slots and table games.

The changes, announced Monday, June 29, went into effect at the Highland-area complex at 9 a.m. Tuesday, June 30, in an effort to support face covering mandates and minimize opportunities for multiple person gatherings at bars during the novel coronavirus pandemic, according to a statement put out by the casino.

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fun at Southern California’s casinos. [Subscribe here.](#)

Smoking will be limited to designated areas that for now will only be located on the outside of the casino, according to the statement.

A spokeswoman said people can no longer walk up to the casino bars to order alcohol. Instead, they’ll have to be at a slot or table game to order their drinks. She said San Manuel plans to increase the number of cocktail servers to accommodate the change.

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San Manuel joins a list of other casinos that have either limited or prohibited smoking inside during the coronavirus pandemic, including the Agua Caliente Casinos in Palm Springs and Rancho Mirage; Augustine Casino; Fantasy Springs Resort Casino; Morongo Casino, Resort & Spa; Pechanga Resort

Casino and Soboba Casino Resort.

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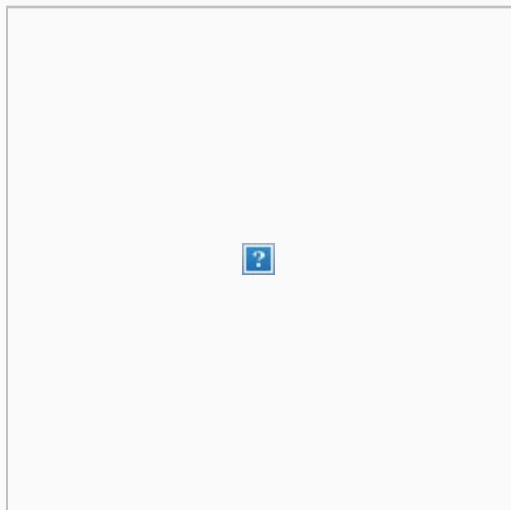
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Montclair approves layoffs to balance budget hit by mall store closures

City will ask voters in November 2020 to raise sales tax





Montclair City Hall on Jan. 18, 2018. The City Council adopted a fiscal year 2020-21 budget using layoffs and reserves. Many vacant positions have been frozen. (Photo by David Allen)

By **STEVE SCAUZILLO** | sscauzillo@scng.com | San Gabriel Valley Tribune

PUBLISHED: June 30, 2020 at 3:20 p.m. | UPDATED: June 30, 2020 at 3:26 p.m.



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Hit by the double-whammy of reduced sales tax revenues from coronavirus shutdown orders and the closure of department stores, the city of Montclair Monday night adopted a scaled-down budget that included 11 layoffs.

By a unanimous vote, the Montclair City Council adopted the staff's budget for fiscal year 2020-21 that begins Wednesday, July 1. The general fund, which pays for the city's main operational expenditures, is set at \$28.7 million, down about \$2 million from the past year. All funds, which include capital and reserve funds, is estimated to be \$42.2 million, also down about \$1.9 million.

To bring in enough money to balance the general fund budget, the City Council agreed to the following:

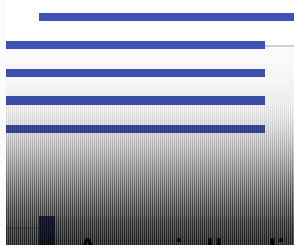
- Lay off six full-time positions paid out of the general fund in various departments and also, lay off five

By



non-general fund positions from the after-school programs run with the Ontario-Montclair School District. This will create \$528,124 savings in expenditures.

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- Transfer about \$754,010 from different reserve funds into the operating budget.
- Place hiring freezes on 32 vacant positions (12 full-time and 20 part-time). Positions not being funded include: a public information officer; a senior citizen supervisor; a police sergeant, officer and dispatcher; seven public works staffers and a code enforcement officer.

City Manager Edward Starr characterized the budget as one with “severe reductions and severe restrictions.”

If the number of coronavirus cases continues to rise, as has been the case in San Bernardino and Los Angeles counties during the past several days, the governor could reverse re-openings of some retail

businesses, further declining sales tax revenues, city officials said.

“Are we looking at even more cuts and impacts on our ability to deliver services? We just don’t know,” Starr told the City Council. He said he is considering quarterly budgetary reviews should revenues begin to drop.

Mayor John Dutrey said the two things to watch are a resurgence of COVID-19 cases and a further drop in consumer confidence. Starr said the city is not “on the verge of insolvency.”

Dutrey agreed, saying the city has about \$17 million in reserves. Also, the city is hoping that a measure planned for the Nov. 3 ballot will garner the 50%-plus-one majority from voters needed to raise the sales and use tax in the city from 8% to 9%, effective April 1, 2021. The measure would raise between \$7 million and \$9.2 million annually, Starr reported.

Councilman Bill Ruh said the city must move away from its dependency on retail sales, saying it is likely that more stores will close at the mall, Montclair Place, as more people shop online.

He is concerned that J.C. Penney Co., which is in bankruptcy reorganization, may be the next store that leaves the mall.

“Being dependent completely on retail is no longer going to work,” Ruh said. One bright spot may be car dealerships, he noted, which are projected to sell more vehicles in the upcoming months.

Thuan Nguyen, a Montclair resident, spoke to the council

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about the Police Department budget, which accounts for between 21% and 30% of the city budget, he said. Starr referred to the reforms coming out of the Black Lives Matter protests over the death of George Floyd, a Black man who died while in police custody in Minneapolis, to “defund police,” which could mean swapping some officers for social workers or mental health workers.

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The city reduced the number of sworn officers right after the Great Recession of 2008-09, from 60 to 47 and in the 2020-21 budget the number will be 45, Dutrey said.

Starr said the majority of residents would agree that police officers are essential. “We need to find a happy medium,” he said.

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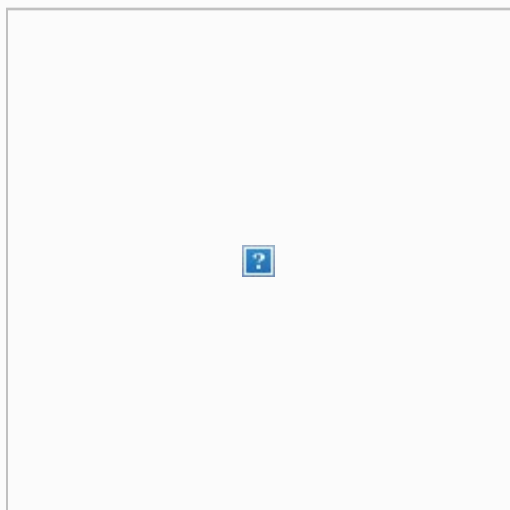
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San Bernardino will review performance of city manager after all

City Manager Teri Ledoux initiated the performance evaluation





Teri Ledoux was appointed San Bernardino city manager Wednesday, June 19, effectively July 1. Ledoux has served as interim city manager since April 3, when her boss, Andrea Miller, was placed on paid leave. (TERRY PIERSON, THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE/SCNG)

By **BRIAN WHITEHEAD** | bwhitehead@scng.com | San Bernardino Sun

PUBLISHED: June 30, 2020 at 2:55 p.m. | UPDATED: June 30, 2020 at 3:41 p.m.

Two weeks after a majority of San Bernardino leaders passed on initiating a review of her performance, City Manager Teri Ledoux scheduled such an evaluation for Wednesday, July 1, ahead of the public portion of the evening's City Council meeting.

In an email this week, Ledoux, who on Wednesday will have been in the role permanently for one year, said she believes "it's appropriate and good practice for the Mayor and City Council to provide performance evaluations at least annually so the City Manager has clear direction and understands the expectations."

Ledoux replaced Andrea Miller on an interim basis last summer after the City Council fired Miller

without cause.

Ledoux later accepted an 18-month contract to run point at City Hall.

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With only six months remaining on that pact, five of seven city leaders on June 17 chose to pass on officially evaluating her performance, as called for both in the city charter and her employment agreement.

Given Ledoux’s expiring contract, one council member said such a review would be “a waste of our time and hers.”

Ledoux, however, said such an evaluation allows the city manager to provide feedback to elected officials about what he or she needs from them in order to be successful at

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carrying out their directives.

“This is especially important now as the City is recruiting for the next City Manager,” she said.

Ledoux is San Bernardino’s fifth top administrator in the past seven years.

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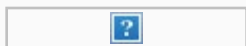
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Fontana DMV office closes down on June 29 after employee tests positive for COVID-19

Jun 30, 2020



The Fontana DMV office closed down on June 29, and a date to reopen has not yet been determined, the DMV said.

The Fontana field office of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) closed on June 29 following the notification of an employee's positive test for COVID-19, the DMV said.

"The office will be cleaned. A date to reopen has not yet been determined," the DMV said in an email message.

The Fontana office, located at 8026 Hemlock Avenue, abruptly closed mid-day on Monday and all employees and customers were told to leave the location.



DMV offices throughout the state had closed down back in March because of concerns regarding the coronavirus pandemic. The Fontana location reopened to the public on May 8.



High Desert locations spared as GNC declares bankruptcy, prepares to shutter stores

By Rene Ray De La Cruz

Staff Writer

Posted Jun 30, 2020 at 7:23 PM

APPLE VALLEY — The future of General Nutrition Centers could be in jeopardy after the company recently filed for bankruptcy protection and announced plans to close hundreds of stores.

On June 24, GNC Holdings Inc. announced that its Chapter 11 bankruptcy plan includes closing somewhere between 800 and 1,200 stores as it attempts to cut debt and restructure amid the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Chain Store Age.

Last July, the 85-year-old vitamin and supplement retailer announced it was nearly \$1 billion in debt and planned to shutter about 900 stores. As of March, GNC had 5,200 stores across the country and 7,300 locations worldwide.

According to the partial list of closures announced by GNC, three High Desert stores appear safe for now. Those locations are in Apple Valley's Jess Ranch Marketplace, Hesperia's High Desert Gateway shopping center and Victorville's Mall of Victor Valley.

Still, 27 stores in California did not escape the chopping block, including those at the Colton's Centrepointe Plaza, Palmdale's Antelope Valley Mall, Rancho Cucamonga's Victoria Gardens and Rancho Mirage's Monterey Marketplace, USA Today reported.

GNC products, such as protein powders, vitamins, shakes, bars and other items are also sold inside most Rite-Aid drug stores.

"Our business has been under financial pressure for the past several years as we have worked to pay down debt and reposition GNC to be more competitive in a challenging operating environment," the company said.

The company said it had made progress and was focusing on refinancing the business until the COVID-19 pandemic created a situation where they were unable to accomplish its refinancing goal.

Mark Willits was one of several supplement users that told the Daily Press they were surprised that retailers like GNC and The Vitamin Shoppe were still in business.

“I buy most of my protein powder and supplements on Amazon, BodyBuilding.com or Vitaglo.com,” said Willits, 37, who lives in Apple Valley. “Buying online is cheaper and you have a bigger variety.”

Fitness trainer Laura Streppone admits to always purchasing her supplements from a “higher quality” online business.

Candice Weber said she enjoys buying less costlier vitamins online and the convenience of having them shipped directly to her home.

GNC said it had reached an agreement with the majority of its secured lenders and key shareholders to pursue a dual-path restructuring process that would allow the company to become a standalone business or be sold.

Under the terms of its agreement, GNC will look for a buyer, with the initial purchase price set at \$760 million. The sale would be executed through a court-supervised auction process at which higher and better bids may be presented.

GNC said its stores will remain open through the bankruptcy process. The company has secured \$130 million in liquidity, including \$100 million in debtor-in-possession financing and \$30 million from modifications to an existing credit facility.

Rene Ray De La Cruz may be reached at 760-951-6227, or by email at RDeLaCruz@VVDailyPress.com. Follow him on Twitter [@DP_ReneDeLaCruz](https://twitter.com/DP_ReneDeLaCruz).

Not a baaaaad idea: County Fire uses goats to mitigate wildfires on Little Mountain

By [Martin Estacio](#)
Staff Writer

Posted Jun 30, 2020 at 6:45 PM

SAN BERNARDINO — A very different type of firefighter descended on the steep hills of Little Mountain.

They didn't wear turnouts, carry hoses or yell out orders.

Instead, the group of about 275 simply bleated, scampered about on cloven hooves and chewed the various dry grasses and weeds on the hillsides.

The herd of goats was doing what nature intended, and Tuesday marked the first time San Bernardino County Fire used such help. Department officials hope the goats will mitigate destructive wildfires that have plagued the area in the past.

"We as a fire department realize that, sure, it's our job to respond to fires but it's our greater responsibility to prevent fires from happening," San Bernardino County Fire Department Chief Dan Munsey said Tuesday. "And in this case we're using 'kid' labor, which I'm sure our HR wouldn't be too happy with."

With steep terrain, light fuels and frequent, gusty winds, the community of Little Mountain — situated above the Shandin Hills Golf Club in San Bernardino — is prone to fires that start quickly and can destroy property almost as fast.

In October 2019, six people were injured, including two firefighters, in a blaze that started on the east side of Little Mountain. The fire also damaged eight homes and left two of them red-tagged as uninhabitable, [the San Bernardino Sun reported](#).

Two people suffered life-threatening burns in 2017 after another fire in the area charred more than 250 acres and shutdown Interstate 215, [the Sun reported](#).

Michael Martinez and his wife, Shawn, have lived on Little Mountain for 16 years. They said every year brings a similar dread, especially since previous fires have come as close as their backyard and burned their palm trees.

"It's beautiful to live up here," Martinez said. "But six months out of the year, when it gets dry and the wind blows, you're always concerned."

The hope, then, is that the goats, and their kids, will clear out vegetation so there's nothing to burn in the first place.

"They're creating a living fire break," said operations manager Johnny Gonzales, who works for Environmental Land Management, the San Diego-based company contracted to provide the herd.

According to Gonzales, an individual goat can eat about 8% of its body weight, which translates to about 10 pounds of plant material a day.

On average, a herd can clear out one to 1 ½ acres per day. They can work in steep terrain, and their dung inhibits weeds from growing back and fertilizes the soil, he said.

The goats looked perfectly content Tuesday while chewing on the hillside. They were hemmed in by an electric fence and guarded by dogs meant to protect them from coyotes and other wildlife.

County Battalion Chief Bob Evans said utilizing the goats was also more environmentally friendly than fire crews that typically burn an area as a preventative measure, which creates smoke pollution.

Michael Martinez said he appreciated what the herd had done so far.

“The goats seem to be working. You take a look where they first started and it’s like a giant lawnmower has cleared all of the brush,” he said.

County officials aim for the goats to eat about 50 acres on Little Mountain. The abatement program could be extended to other areas if it works there.

The chewed-down buffer will hopefully provide residents, like Martinez, with a more peaceful state of mind.

“We pay for the view every year, especially at night when the wind’s blowing real hard,” he said. “It’ll scare you.”

Martin Estacio may be reached at MEstacio@VVDailyPress.com or at 760-955-5358. Follow him on Twitter @[DP_mestacio](https://twitter.com/DP_mestacio).



LOCAL NEWS • News

Dog park to be added to Frisbie Park expansion in Rialto

Frisbie Park will better serve locals and visitors at project's end, city leaders say





Construction crews work on the expansion project at Frisbie Park in Rialto on Tuesday, June 30, 2020. (Photo by Watchara Phomicinda, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)

By **BRIAN WHITEHEAD** | bwhitehead@scng.com | San Bernardino Sun

PUBLISHED: July 1, 2020 at 8:33 a.m. | UPDATED: July 1, 2020 at 9:17 a.m.

A dog park is coming to northern Rialto as part of the long-awaited, highly-anticipated Frisbie Park expansion project.

The project-within-the-project is expected to cost about \$179,300 and conclude in December.

1 of 6

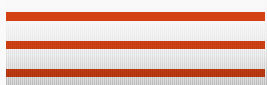
Construction crews work on the expansion project at Frisbie Park in Rialto on Tuesday, June 30, 2020. (Photo by Watchara Phomicinda, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)



City leaders approved the addition Tuesday, June 23.

The Frisbie Park expansion, which is to include the development of approximately 8.5 acres of land within the existing 27.4-acre site at 598 E. Easton St., just south of the 210 Freeway, was originally expected to conclude late last year.

TOP ARTICLES 1/5



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But a bungled bidding process delayed the start of construction.

City leaders broke ground last summer.

About \$18.3 million in general fund revenue and Park Development Impact Fees has been spent thus far on the project, leaving north of \$1.8 million in the budget for the dog park.

First pitched by Mayor Deborah Robertson early last year, the dog park will be added to space south of Easton Street and include separately fenced and adjacent areas for large and small dogs.

Elected officials have said Frisbie Park will better serve locals, visitors and organized baseball and softball leagues at project's end.

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FEATURED

Sheriff's Department has new mascot

Jun 29, 2020



Mac, a golden-doodle, is the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department's new mascot.

The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department has a new mascot.

Mac, a golden-doodle, is named after Detective Jeremiah MacKay, who was killed in the line of duty in 2013.



"Mac was a gift to the Frank Bland Regional Training Center by academy classes 218 and 219," the Sheriff's Department said in a Facebook post. "When Mac is old enough, he will accompany our trainees on their runs and help keep them motivated."

Several commenters on Facebook said that Mac is "adorable."

One commenter, Bonnie Butler, said: "Welcome to the department. You are such a cutie."



https://www.highlandnews.net/news/public_safety/11-year-old-killed-in-hit-and-run-collision/article_d105e8c4-bb01-11ea-bde1-6359cc365942.html

BREAKING

Police report

11-year-old killed in hit-and-run collision

Jun 30, 2020

Highland sheriff's deputies are seeking information that could help identify a hit-and-run driver who struck and killed an 11-year-old on Monday, June 29, at the intersection of Church Street and Glenheather Drive.

According to a sheriff's department press release, at approximately 8:30 p.m. on Monday deputies from the Highland Police Department responded to the intersection of Church Street and Glenheather Drive in reference to a pedestrian who was struck by a vehicle. The vehicle involved is a dark colored SUV that was traveling south on Church Street when it collided with the pedestrian. The driver of the vehicle left the scene.

Deputies arrived at the location and found the pedestrian unresponsive on the side of the roadway. The pedestrian, an 11-year-old female, was transported to the hospital where she was pronounced deceased.



The collision is being investigated by the Highland Police Department. Anyone who witnessed or has information regarding the traffic collision is urged to contact Deputy T.Houn or the Detective Bureau from the Highland Police Department, (909) 425-9793.





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FEATURED, LOCAL NEWS, TOP STORY

CORONER IDENTIFIES VICTIMS OF 2 FATAL COLLISIONS THURSDAY IN YUCCA VALLEY

JUNE 30, 2020 | Z107.7 NEWS | [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

The coroner's office has identified the two victims who were killed in separate crashes in Yucca Valley Thursday. Just after 3 p.m., 81-year-old Ramona Pedrosa of Yucca Valley was a passenger in a vehicle that was hit broadside on the passenger side by an unidentified male driver at the intersection of Highway 62 and Airway Avenue. County Fire Battalion Chief Donnie Vilorio said Pedrosa appeared alert and responsive when firefighters were extricating her from her vehicle, she became unresponsive when placed on the gurney. Paramedics performed CPR as she was taken to Hi-Desert Medical Center, where she was pronounced deceased.

Then about 10:40 p.m. Thursday, first responders were called to a fatal collision involving a Jeep Wrangler and a pedestrian. David Morse, 75, of Yucca Valley, was crossing the highway, outside of a

crosswalk, when he was struck by the Jeep traveling westbound on the highway. Morse was killed at the scene.

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Los Angeles Times

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CALIFORNIA

As coronavirus cases surge, California pauses multimillion-dollar testing expansion



Carson Mayor Albert Robles self-tests for COVID-19 at a new drive-up site outside the Congresswoman Juanita Millender-McDonald Community Center. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

By ANGELA HART, RACHEL BLUTH

JULY 1, 2020 | 5 AM

SACRAMENTO — In April, Gov. Gavin Newsom launched a multimillion-dollar state initiative to bring COVID-19 testing to the people and places with the least access: rural towns and disadvantaged inner-city neighborhoods.

California is now halting its expansion, citing costs, even as the state is getting walloped by record-setting spikes in new infections and double-digit increases in hospitalizations.

The state will no longer fund new testing sites, despite pleas from counties for additional assistance — and it has closed some locations and moved them elsewhere. It also has threatened to pull testing out of underutilized sites, according to nearly two dozen interviews with county public health officials.

While it's early in the process, some winners and losers have emerged: El Dorado County,

east of Sacramento, lost its testing site in the town of Shingle Springs in June because it couldn't fill enough appointment slots, while Fresno County gained a site that had been pulled from elsewhere, said its health officer, Dr. Rais Vohra.

Yet San Mateo County has asked state officials three times for a second state-funded venue to address testing gaps in Black and farmworker neighborhoods but has been "told no, repeatedly," said Justin Mates, deputy county manager. So the county transformed its sole state site into a roving testing unit.

"Equity is certainly a concern for us," Mates said. "We really need help with testing access if we're going to reach our Latino residents and places like East Palo Alto," a diverse city whose population is mainly Latino, African American and Asian/Pacific Islander.

CALIFORNIA

Rural California is reopening despite little coronavirus testing. Is it too soon?

May 16, 2020

California has committed up to \$132 million in contracts with two private COVID-19 testing companies, Verily Life Sciences and OptumServe, to offer free coronavirus tests at more than 100 sites that the Newsom administration has identified as "[testing deserts](#)." The expansion has dramatically increased the state's overall testing numbers,

which swelled from 16,000 tests per day in April to 105,000 on Monday.

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Testing is also available at county-funded locations, private pharmacies, hospitals and community clinics.

State Health and Human Services Secretary Mark Ghaly confirmed that California is pulling

sites out of counties that aren't generating high enough numbers and cutting off funding for new locations.

"With every asset and resource — especially when it's scarce — you want it to go to places where it's most needed," Ghaly said. "It wouldn't be prudent or wise to maintain spending in a place where resources aren't being used."

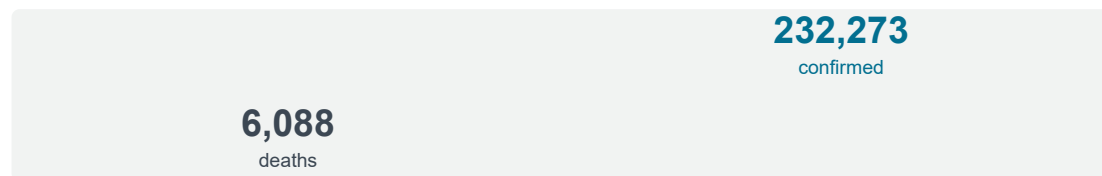
Newsom has voiced concern about the testing price tag, given "unprecedented" budget shortfalls. "There is a big cost associated with testing," he said in late June.

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A Newsom administration official confirmed that the state wants to see counties fill at least 80% of testing slots at each location. And if testing drops below 50% for a few days or longer, counties are warned, the sites could be transferred elsewhere.

Coronavirus cases statewide »

As of June 30, 10:07 p.m. Pacific



Statewide deaths by day
California » L.A. County » Orange County »

We are moving into [Stage 3 of reopening the state](#). Lower-risk businesses can now reopen with social distancing guidelines.

Counties argue that there's a public health benefit to keeping underperforming locations open — simply to ensure that testing is available to rural and disenfranchised communities. Across the state, counties are fighting to save state-funded sites even as they are being overwhelmed by increased numbers of COVID-19 cases, linked largely to social gatherings.

"It's how we are able to quickly identify where the virus is and if there are hot spots," said Dr. Olivia Kasirye, health officer for Sacramento County, where holiday celebrations and booze-fueled gatherings among family and friends are sending infection rates soaring.

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Contra Costa County saw its testing numbers drop in June and was at risk of losing a state-funded site until it proved it could keep appointments near 80% of capacity, said its health officer, Dr. Chris Farnitano.

Riverside County was warned June 16 that a state-funded site north of Temecula would be “moved to another county” if it didn’t get its testing above 50%, according to an email from the state’s testing task force. The state told Mendocino County it could lose its state-funded site, the only free testing available within a two-hour drive for some rural residents, if it didn’t push numbers up.

Alameda County grew so frustrated with state requirements that it undertook a testing expansion of its own.

“We realized we couldn’t depend on the state, especially to reach our vulnerable communities,” said Dr. Jocelyn Freeman-Garrick, an emergency room physician at Highland Hospital in Oakland, who is leading the county’s testing task force.

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Which California counties are reopening?

El Dorado County, which lost its site, so far has maintained a relatively low count of COVID-19 cases. It can’t afford to replace the site but will “make do,” said county spokesperson Carla Hass.

Ghaly said the state is working with counties in danger of losing sites to give them a chance to fill testing slots. State officials declined to say how many counties have lost sites, but as new infections have soared, testing numbers are starting to pick back up. The list of counties at risk of losing a site has dwindled from around a dozen in early June to a few last week.

Public health experts say focusing so intently on testing numbers, and not on adequate testing in Black and Latino neighborhoods, risks abandoning communities that already face immense barriers to healthcare.

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"If you ignore these communities, then we'll keep seeing the kinds of surges that we're seeing now," said Dr. Tony Iton, formerly the top health official for Alameda County and now a senior vice president of the California Endowment, which is working with counties to expand testing in underserved neighborhoods.

Entrenched socioeconomic barriers also make it difficult to get, and keep, testing numbers up. For instance, people who want to be tested at state sites often need Internet access and an email address. Most sites are drive-through, requiring access to a vehicle.

Many low-income people can't meet those requirements, while undocumented immigrants fear that providing personal information to obtain a test could expose them to immigration officials, said Dr. Marty Fenstersheib, a former health officer of Santa Clara County who is leading its testing program.

"We can have all the tests we want, but if people are afraid to come and get tested, it's not going to be of any benefit," he said.

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State contracts that fund the testing sites were extended in June but are set to expire Aug. 31, and administration officials have not told counties whether the state will continue funding them after that, said Mimi Hall, president of the County Health Executives Assn. of California and director of public health for Santa Cruz County.

Counties can't afford to keep the sites running, said Hall, who is on the state's testing task force.

"It's hard to plan when we don't know how long we'll be able to keep them," Hall said.

This story was produced by [KHN](#) (Kaiser Health News), which publishes [California Healthline](#), an editorially independent service of the [California Health Care Foundation](#). KHN is not affiliated with Kaiser Permanente.

CALIFORNIA COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Sections



SCIENCE

'Pooled testing' for COVID-19 holds promise and pitfalls



People line up for coronavirus testing at a factory in Wuhan, China. (Chinatopix)

By [ASSOCIATED PRESS](#)

JUNE 30, 2020 | 10:30 AM

The nation's top health officials are banking on a new approach to dramatically boost U.S. screening for the coronavirus: combining test samples in batches instead of running them one by one.

The potential benefits include stretching laboratory supplies, reducing costs and expanding testing to millions more Americans who may [unknowingly be spreading the virus](#). Health officials think infected people who aren't showing symptoms are largely responsible for the rising number of cases across more than half of states.

"Pooling would give us the capacity to go from a half-a-million tests per day to potentially 5 million individuals tested per day," [Dr. Deborah Birx](#), the White House's coronavirus

response coordinator, told a recent meeting of laboratory experts.

For now, federal health regulators have not cleared any labs or test maker to use the technique. The Food and Drug Administration issued [guidelines for test makers](#) in mid-June and wanted each to first show that mixing samples didn't hurt accuracy, one of the potential downsides.

So it's not clear when pooled testing may be available for mass screenings at schools and businesses.

The principle is simple: Instead of running each person's test individually, laboratories would combine parts of [nasal swab samples](#) from several people and test them together. A negative result would clear everyone in the batch. A positive result would require each sample to be individually retested. Pooling works best with lab-run tests, which take hours to process — not the much quicker individual tests used in clinics or doctors' offices.

CALIFORNIA

Column One: Here's what coronavirus testing for a very sick patient looks like from swab to result

April 1, 2020

The idea for pooling dates from World War II, when it was considered for quickly screening blood samples from U.S. draftees for syphilis. Since then, it has been adopted to screen blood samples for HIV and hepatitis. And developing countries have used pooled samples to stretch testing supplies.

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China reported using the approach as part of a recent campaign to test all 11 million residents of Wuhan, the city where the virus first emerged late last year.

"Americans think this is some new concept because ordinarily we don't have this challenge of having to stretch testing capacity," said [Darius Lakdawalla](#), a health economist at USC.

Lakdawalla and colleagues estimate that pooled testing could save schools and businesses from 50% to 70% on costs. Under [their model](#), a group of 100 employees could be divided into 20 batches of five people. Assuming 5% of people carry the virus, only five pools would test positive, requiring individual testing. Ultimately, 45 tests would be needed for the pooled approach, versus 100 individual tests.

But pooling won't always be the best option. Importantly, it won't save time or resources when used in COVID-19 hot spots, such as an outbreak at a nursing home. That's because the logistical and financial benefits of pooling only add up when a small number of pools test positive.

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Experts recommend the technique when fewer than 10% of people are expected to test positive. About 7% of U.S. tests have been positive for the virus in the past week, according to an AP analysis, though rates vary widely from place to place. For example, pooling would not be cost-effective in Arizona, where [a surge](#) has pushed positive test results to over 22%. But the approach could make sense in New Jersey, with a positivity

rate under 2%.

Nebraska's state health laboratory used batch testing with special permission from the governor and the FDA in March. The lab's director said they had to stop several weeks ago when their positive rate jumped to 17% with outbreaks at meat packing plants.

"We knew that pooling wasn't working anymore when those rates started going up," said [Dr. Peter Iwen](#).

SCIENCE

Inside the body, the coronavirus is even more sinister than scientists had realized

June 26, 2020

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Reserving pooled testing for large groups with low rates of infection dovetails with the government's increasing focus on people without symptoms spreading the virus, especially younger people.

"It's a really good tool. It can be used in any of a number of circumstances, including at the community level or even in schools," [Dr. Anthony Fauci](#), the nation's top infectious-disease expert, told a Senate hearing Tuesday.

Still, health officials may still have to persuade some key players to adopt the method. LabCorp, one of the nation's biggest testing chains, said in an email that it was familiar with pooled testing but currently believed individual patient testing was "the most effective and efficient way" to test for COVID-19.

[Dr. Colleen Kraft](#) of Emory University worries that batched testing — with its multiple rounds of screening for some patients — could slow test results, a key factor for getting those infected into quarantine.

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“If you are trying to do something rapid,” Kraft said, “this actually prolongs the turnaround time.”

She and others also have concerns about accuracy, since test performance tends to drop when screening larger groups of people where the targeted disease is less common.

“If we can’t trust the test results, then there’s no point in doing the test,” said [Jennifer Nuzzo](#), of Johns Hopkins University’s COVID-19 Testing Insights Initiative.

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SCIENCE

U.S. Coronavirus Testing Could Fail Again

A surge in demand for tests is overwhelming lab-services companies, creating new backlogs and delays.

ALEXIS C. MADRIGAL AND ROBINSON MEYER 3:10 PM ET



GETTY / THE ATLANTIC

***Editor's Note:** The Atlantic is making vital coverage of the coronavirus available to all readers. Find the collection [here](#).*

The United States is once again at risk of outstripping its COVID-19 testing capacity, an ominous development that would deny the country a crucial tool to understand its pandemic in real time.

The American testing supply chain is stretched to the limit, and the ongoing outbreak in the South and West could overwhelm it, according to epidemiologists and testing-company executives. While the country's laboratories have added tremendous capacity in the past few months—the U.S. now tests about 550,000

people each day, a fivefold increase from early April—demand for viral tests is again outpacing supply.

If demand continues to accelerate and shortages are not resolved, then turnaround times for test results will rise, tests will effectively be rationed, and the number of infections that are never counted in official statistics will grow. Any plan to contain the virus will depend on fast and accurate testing, which can identify newly infectious people before they set off new outbreaks. Without it, the U.S. is in the dark.

[Read: A devastating new stage of the pandemic]

The delays have already started. Yesterday, Quest Diagnostics, one of the country's largest medical-testing companies, said that its systems were overwhelmed and that it would now be able to deliver COVID-19 test results in one day only for hospitalized patients, patients facing emergency surgery, and symptomatic health-care workers. Everyone else now must wait three to five days for a test result.

“Despite the rapid expansion of our testing capacity, demand for testing has been growing faster,” Quest said in a statement last week warning of such a possibility. The company then said that orders for COVID-19 testing had grown by 50 percent in three weeks.

“This is very bad,” Michael Mina, an epidemiology professor at Harvard, told us. Rapid test-turnaround times are the only way to control the coronavirus without forcing every potentially contagious person—everyone who's had contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19—into quarantine, he said: “Our modeling efforts more or less show that if you don't get results back in a day or so, outbreaks really can't be stopped without isolating and quarantining all contacts preemptively.”

Quest is not the only firm to report growing problems. “We hit the wall three weeks ago,” Jon Cohen, the executive chairman of BioReference Laboratories, a lab-services company that is testing patients for the virus in New York, New Jersey, and Florida, told us. “At that point, most laboratories were already running at capacity, as far as I can tell.”

In mid-June, four changes hit all at once, Cohen said. Large companies began to test their employees en masse, hospitals started to test every patient who needed an

elective procedure, and nursing homes started regularly testing their employees and some residents. The American public also seemed to seek out voluntary tests in greater numbers this month. The surge in testing overwhelmed both his testing company's capacity and its equipment suppliers, he said.

“We not only hit capacity, but any ability to increase our capacity became limited by the supply side,” he said. “The vendors, the suppliers can't keep up.”

[Read: [America is giving up on the pandemic](#)]

LabCorp, another major testing company, also recognized the surging demand for tests in a statement this weekend. “We are doing everything we can to continue delivering results in a timely manner while continually increasing testing capacity,” it said.

Unlike in the first days of the pandemic, when COVID-19 testing kits themselves were in short supply, now the problem lies with the equipment needed to get test results. The hardest-hit new areas do not have enough machines to process samples, leading to a growing backlog of tests, lab directors told us. Some are also running out of the chemical reagent that must react with a testing specimen.

Labs in the U.S. use several different types of viral-testing machines to diagnose COVID-19, and each type has its own supply-chain issues and processing challenges, Lauren Sauer, an emergency-medicine professor at Johns Hopkins, told us by text message. With “so many platforms” in use, she said, resolving bottlenecks and shortages nationwide is especially hard.

“What is currently happening [on testing] is so pocketed and disconnected,” she said.

The American Clinical Laboratory Association, a trade group that represents testing labs, has also warned of shortages. “While our members are collectively performing hundreds of thousands of tests each day, the anticipated demand for COVID-19 testing over the coming weeks will likely exceed members' testing capacities,” said Julie Khani, its president, in a statement. The group's members conduct about half of the country's daily coronavirus tests, according to information in her statement.

The problems have not been felt everywhere. Dina Greene, the director of laboratory services for the health-care group Kaiser Permanente in Washington State, told us that supply-chain problems have not yet disrupted the group's ability to work. But demand for tests was increasing, she confirmed, and she "wouldn't be surprised" if shortages hit her team soon.

[Read: 'How could the CDC make that mistake?']

Testing has hobbled the American response since the earliest days of the pandemic. As our reporting revealed, the U.S. had tested fewer than 3,000 people for the coronavirus by March 5, even though community spread of the virus had been detected more than a week earlier. In the following weeks, states and hospitals rationed access to tests, granting them only to health-care workers and the sickest patients. This meant that many people who may have had the virus, especially in the Northeast, were never tested for it.

Even after the initial crunch in March, the country's testing apparatus continued to be beset by problems. For much of April, as the virus killed tens of thousands of Americans, testing plateaued at roughly 150,000 tests a day. Since then, the number of daily tests has increased, but not as fast as experts once hoped. Only in the past two weeks has the U.S. succeeded in testing more than 500,000 people a day, which the Harvard Global Health Institute once said would be a good goal for mid-May. The institute said today that the U.S. must test at least 1.2 million people a day to control the outbreak and at least 4.3 million people a day to eliminate it.

In all that time, the federal government never solved the testing problem. In early April, for instance, researchers at Duke University and the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank, called for the government to take charge of the crisis by establishing a task force that would consolidate information about testing and help states and companies understand what was possible. Such a task force could manage emerging shortages, and it could help the country understand how much testing capacity might be attainable by July, August, or September.

But such an effort never took shape. “If this work has been done, I have not seen it, and I fear that neither have the governors and other state and local leaders who are having to make decisions about how and when to reopen,” Caitlin Rivers, an author of the report and a professor at Johns Hopkins University, told Congress last month.

Since then, the Trump administration’s grip on testing has slackened. Brett Giroir, the White House’s testing czar, returned to his day job at the Department of Health and Human Services this month. And at a rally on June 20, President Donald Trump said he told members of his staff to “slow down the testing, please,” because he did not like the growing number of confirmed coronavirus infections. (The president’s staff said afterward that he was joking. After denying for several days that he meant the comment in jest, Trump said last week that he’d been speaking “sarcastically.” Deborah Birx, who is coordinating the White House response to the coronavirus, has said that Trump never asked her to slow down testing.)

“We basically need a Manhattan Project for testing,” Sauer said. “A nationwide, systematic strategy with a clear agency lead is desperately needed. But it’s not happening and I think we all fear significant access issues and supply-chain disruptions in the near future.”

The U.S. is seeing a new surge of cases in the South and West that threatens to overwhelm its health system anew. The country reported more new confirmed COVID-19 cases last week than in any other week of the pandemic so far. While the administration’s focus has drifted elsewhere, demand for tests is only growing. Alex Greninger, a laboratory-medicine professor at the University of Washington, told us that it was little wonder the testing companies were overwhelmed.

“The testing supply chain wasn’t meant for this kind of onslaught of volume across the world at the same time,” he said.

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Los Angeles Times

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CALIFORNIA

Newsom warns of more coronavirus restrictions, enforcement ahead of July 4 holiday weekend



Jaden Veal, 7, left, and his father James Veal, right, purchase fireworks in Hawthorne. Gov. Gavin Newsom said he planned to announce new restrictions leading up the the July 4 holiday weekend. (Francine Orr / Los Angeles Times)

By [TARYN LUNA](#), [BENJAMIN ORESKES](#)

JUNE 30, 2020 | 2:25 PM

Gov. Gavin Newsom said he planned to announce new restrictions on Wednesday ahead of the July 4 holiday weekend, continuing to reverse course on reopening California as COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations rise.

“Tomorrow we’ll be making some additional announcements on efforts to use that dimmer switch that we’ve referred to and begin to toggle back on our stay-at-home order and tighten things up,” Newsom said. “The framework for us is this: If you’re not going to stay home and you’re not going to wear masks in public, we have to enforce, and we will.”

The governor, who often foreshadows his actions before he unveils them, warned that changes would also include restrictions on indoor gatherings but did not provide details. Newsom said family gatherings had been one of the “areas of biggest concern” as immediate and extended family members mixed together.

The average rate of positive cases in the state has grown to 5.6% in the last two weeks, with a sharper jump of 5.9% over seven days, Newsom said. The state is monitoring 19 counties that have fallen short of meeting guidelines for at least three days due to an increase in the spread of the virus, growing hospitalizations or a lack of hospital capacity. Newsom said he expected four additional counties to be added to the list on Wednesday.

California has 226,850 confirmed cases and more than 6,000 deaths from COVID-19, [according to the Los Angeles Times tracker](#) of the outbreak.

“We bent the curve in the state of California once. We will bend the curve again, mark my word,” Newsom said. “We will crush this pandemic. We will annihilate it. We’ll get past this, but we’re going to have to be tougher, and we’re going to have to be smarter in terms of our approaches.”

CALIFORNIA

Californians get out before Newsom announces new restrictions

June 30, 2020

The governor provided an update on the virus Tuesday at a news conference outside a Motel 6 in the Bay Area city of Pittsburg, where he called attention to efforts to house the state’s homeless population.

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The state launched an effort called Project Roomkey in April, with the goal of securing 15,000 hotel and motel rooms to provide short-term shelter for vulnerable homeless

people during the COVID-19 pandemic. More than a month into the program, [a review of state records](#) found that only about half of the rooms were occupied. The Newsom administration claims the state has worked to house an estimated [13,000 people in 10,600 rooms](#). Newsom said on Tuesday that, to date, 14,200 people had been sheltered, and he touted an 85% occupancy rate for rooms under the program.

The Newsom administration expects the Federal Emergency Management Agency to ultimately reimburse state and local governments for up to 75% of the cost of rooms, meals, security and custodial services.

The 2020-2021 state budget [Newsom signed on Monday](#) included \$300 million for local governments to help protect Californians experiencing homelessness and \$50 million to the Department of Social Services to secure hotel and motel rooms and trailers to shelter the homeless.

Now the state is attempting to transition the temporary program into more permanent housing under a new effort Newsom has dubbed Project Homekey, with \$550 million from the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund to acquire rooms for long-term shelter. The funding, which will be provided to local governments through the Department of Housing and Community Development, must be spent by Dec. 30. The budget also includes another \$50 million in state money to help locals operate the program.

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"We're providing unprecedented support for cities and counties to support a program for our most vulnerable residents," Newsom said. "We're making a real impact."

CALIFORNIA

After record-breaking day of coronavirus cases, California surpasses 6,000 deaths

June 30, 2020

Officials in Los Angeles separately had set their own goal of placing 15,000 homeless people who were either medically vulnerable or older than 65 in motels and hotels that they had leased. City and county officials prioritized the part of the population they thought was most likely to die on the streets — with or without the pandemic.

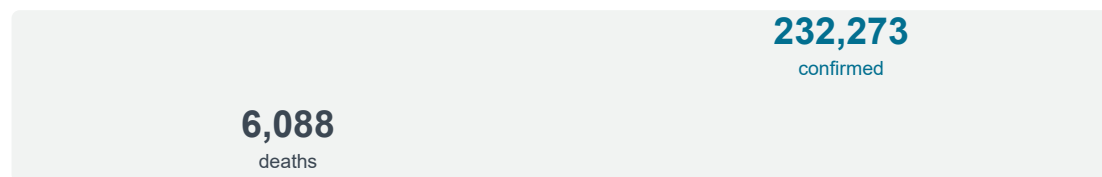
After scrutinizing their own data, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Agency estimated that about 15,000 homeless people met the criteria set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as being the most susceptible to the virus. They are 65 or older and have multiple health conditions, including respiratory problems or diabetes.

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As of Monday, 3,781 people had been housed and the pace of hotel and motel rooms being added to the county program had come to a standstill. Homeless people and outreach workers have complained about long waits as demand for the rooms has far outpaced the supply.

Coronavirus cases statewide »

As of June 30, 10:07 p.m. Pacific



Statewide deaths by day
California » L.A. County » Orange County »

We are moving into [Stage 3 of reopening the state](#). Lower-risk businesses can now reopen with social distancing guidelines.

Sacramento bureau chief John Myers contributed to this report.

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Taryn Luna covers Gov. Gavin Newsom and California politics in Sacramento for the Los Angeles Times.

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LIVE NOW / KTLA 5 Morning News

CALIFORNIA

Newsom expected to issue new coronavirus restrictions ahead of Fourth of July weekend

by: [Associated Press](#), [Eric Spillman](#)

Posted: Jul 1, 2020 / 07:39 AM PDT / Updated: Jul 1, 2020 / 08:25 AM PDT

Gov. Gavin Newsom is hinting that he will tighten coronavirus restrictions for California's nearly 40 million residents as a COVID-19 surge has counties rushing to close down bars and beaches ahead of the Fourth of July weekend.

Newsom planned Wednesday to announce he will "tighten things up" only weeks after loosening his March 19 stay-at-home order and reopening most businesses.

The state requires people to wear masks when they can't maintain physical distance but public health officials have said lack of social distancing during Memorial Day get-togethers in May may have contributed to the surge.

California has confirmed close to 223,000 infections, a nearly 50% increase over two weeks ago that has been driven in part by the state's ability to now test more than 100,000 people per day. But more concerning to officials is the steady growth in COVID-19 hospitalizations — a 43% increase in the past two weeks.

Newsom said the state will be more aggressive in enforcing public health orders.

"If you're not going to stay home and you're not going to wear masks in public, we have to enforce — and we will," Newsom said Tuesday.

"You've got to keep people from congregating," agreed Dr. George Rutherford, an epidemiologist at the University of California, San Francisco. But he said it's up to the public to heed social distancing.

"Just because it's summer and they feel like having a barbecue with all their friends, it can't be that way," Rutherford said. "I don't know how one legislates that."

“For some of our more independent retailers, if they have to shut down, many of them probably won’t open,” said Rachel Michelin, president of the California Retailers Association. “They barely made it through what was it, 10 weeks that we were closed? That was hard ... I don’t know that they will make it.”

Across the state, many local governments are already tightening restrictions. Counties surrounding the San Francisco Bay have delayed some reopenings as new cases increase. In Los Angeles, officials say they will close beaches and ban fireworks displays in the nation’s most populous county this weekend as it hit a one-day record of 2,903 more confirmed cases and more than 100,000 cases overall. Ventura County, L.A.’s northern neighbor, also planned to shut down beaches beginning July 3.

Half Moon Bay, a scenic stretch of beaches about a half-hour’s drive from San Francisco, said people “inundated” the city over Memorial Day weekend and urged them to stay away.

“Under normal circumstances, Half Moon Bay heartily welcomes visitors — tourism is part of our identity and an important economic driver,” Mayor Adam Eisen said in a statement. “But coming here this weekend would be reckless and unsafe for the public health. Do the right thing. Stay close to home.”

In the Central Valley, officials in Fresno ordered all bars to close as some hospitals invoked emergency protocols because they were nearing capacity.

“Our cases are not currently under control,” said Dr. Rais Vohra, interim health officer for Fresno County. “We’re quite worried that we don’t have room to expand.”

And in Riverside County, public health officials are seeing an increase in cases among younger people, many of them without symptoms of the virus even though they test positive.

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adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

Last week, Newsom asked Imperial County to impose more restrictions after hospitals in the county near the U.S.-Mexico border had so many patients they had to transfer some to nearby facilities. On Monday, the county Board of Supervisors approved a plan that would close parks and force some businesses to shut down in-person shopping.

Altogether, California public health officials are closely monitoring 19 counties for outbreaks. Newsom said four more counties could be added to the list by Wednesday.

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Newsom to 'tighten' coronavirus restrictions, enforcement ahead of July 4 holiday; announcement expected Wednesday

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CALIFORNIA

California fights to prevent July 4 coronavirus disaster



Kids ride a wave together as they learn to surf on a warm summer day at the San Clemente Pier Tuesday. (Allen J. Schaben / Los Angeles Times)

By TARYN LUNA, JAKE SHERIDAN, RONG-GONG LIN II

JULY 1, 2020 | 5 AM

State and local governments planned more restrictions Tuesday [as coronavirus cases](#) continued to spike and officials became increasingly alarmed [that the July 4th holiday](#)

weekend could bring a wave of new infections that could overwhelm hospitals.

The surge in coronavirus cases and hospitalizations began [around the Memorial Day](#) weekend as residents began socializing after months largely spent at home, and officials say a repeat of that behavior — failing to wear masks and mixing with many people outside of your household — this holiday weekend would be disastrous.

“I think it is a critical moment for the public health message to be given out and heard,” said Dr. Robert Kim-Farley, medical epidemiologist and infectious diseases expert at the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health. “Traditionally, the Fourth of July has been such a time for large gatherings and beach going. If those same practices occurred, we could be back with even a further spike upon our spike that we’re having now.”

[Past holidays](#) where there was extensive social interaction, like Mardi Gras in Louisiana and the Lunar New Year holiday in Wuhan, China, have been associated with big spikes in COVID-19 that reverberated across their respective nations.

For the second consecutive day, California broke a record for the most cases reported in a single day — 8,610 cases, according to [The Times’ coronavirus tracker](#). It was only the second time the state has recorded more than 8,000 cases in a single day.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, [the director](#) of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, warned Tuesday that new cases nationally could rise to 100,000 a day if behaviors don’t change.

The nation is currently recording about 40,000 cases a day. That’s double what the country saw the first week of June, when there were an average of 20,700 cases reported daily.

The percent of coronavirus tests coming back positive in California continued to rise —

hitting 5.95% Tuesday, a Los Angeles Times analysis found, up from 5.28% a week earlier, and 4.45% a week before that. That's an indication that disease spread is worsening.

The Times' analysis has found that the average number of patients hospitalized in California with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 rose 36% last week compared to what it was a month earlier.

On Tuesday, Ventura County joined Los Angeles County [in closing beaches during](#) the holiday, while San Diego County imposed a 10 p.m. curfew on all restaurants and bars in a move to close down alcohol-fueled nightlife that some fear is helping spread COVID-19.

"We simply cannot go on with business as usual while this virus continues to rage our nation and our community," said San Diego County supervisor Greg Cox.

Gov. Gavin Newsom said he planned to announce additional restrictions Wednesday.

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"We'll be making some additional announcements on efforts to use that dimmer switch that we've referred to and begin to toggle back on our stay-at-home order and tighten things up," Newsom said. "The framework for us is this: If you're not going to stay home, and you're not going to wear masks in public, we have to enforce, and we will."

The governor warned that changes would also include restrictions on indoor gatherings but did not provide details. Newsom said family gatherings had been one of the "areas of biggest concern" as immediate and extended family members mixed together.

Some people frightened by the spike in cases said they [would welcome stricter rules](#).

"To save people that are dying or getting infected, why open it up when it's not ready or safe to do so?" said Teshome Tekeste, 23, as he walked in Santa Monica on Tuesday.

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He said he's being cautious: only eating takeout, masking-up when friends are around. The coming holiday scares him.

"I'm worried and nervous. I know we were doing really good prior to opening bars and restaurants and stores, and once we opened a gateway, that really opened up everything else," Tekeste said. "With July 4th coming up this weekend, I feel like a lot of people are going to be out regardless of the restrictions."

As beaches and bars close, he's not sure what he'll do on Saturday. "It's hard to tell. When the day comes, I'll probably figure something out," Tekeste said. "I'll feel comfortable doing anything if I know I will be protected — myself and the people around me. But I can't control other people's actions, so that's the issue that I don't know."

As she walked to the Apple store in Santa Monica, Terry Marie said she almost canceled her appointment upon seeing Monday's spike in COVID-19 cases.

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The virus had already scrapped her Fourth of July plans, she said.

"I'll probably be upstairs on my porch looking out, seeing if I see any fireworks," said Marie, a Venice resident in her 50s.

Marie called off a watch party set for Friday night for the digital release of "Hamilton" after a friend told her local and state orders prohibit household mixing.

"I've got to be honest, it's getting old now," she said.

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Officials have said there are several likely causes for the spike — people hanging out in crowded spaces without masks as well as the return of private gatherings like family

barbecues, graduation parties and Father's Day events. The protests over the police killing of George Floyd, which brought tens of thousands onto streets, might also have spread coronavirus but there is debate about how much.

In the Inland Empire, hospitals are hovering at capacity levels, and officials in Los Angeles and elsewhere said they are just weeks from that point unless the spread can be slowed. That is why so much focus is being placed on keeping July 4 weekend under control.

"I know how much we look forward to this time of year," Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said Monday evening. "But not this year. This year we have to think about saving lives to protect what we have in this country."

The state is monitoring 19 counties that have fallen short of meeting guidelines for at least three days due to an increase in the spread of the virus, growing hospitalizations or a lack of hospital capacity. Newsom said he expected four additional counties to be added to the list on Wednesday.

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California has 232,273 confirmed cases and more than 6,000 deaths from COVID-19, [according to the Los Angeles Times tracker](#) of the outbreak. California was long hailed as a coronavirus success story.

Coronavirus cases statewide »

As of June 30, 10:07 p.m. Pacific

232,273
confirmed

6,088
deaths

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We are moving into [Stage 3 of reopening the state](#). Lower-risk businesses can now reopen with social distancing guidelines.

"We bent the curve in the state of California once. We will bend the curve again, mark my word," Newsom said. "We will crush this pandemic. We will annihilate it. We'll get past this, but we're going to have to be tougher. And we're going to have to be smarter in terms of our approaches."

Increasing numbers of California counties are following Newsom's guidance and closing bars.

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"People don't social distance well after a couple drinks, and it's one of the hardest environments to trace contacts in," Riverside County Public Health Officer Cameron Kaiser said Tuesday.

But some spots remain resistant.

Michelle Steel, chairwoman of the Orange County Board of Supervisors, said Tuesday that the health officer "is considering the issuance of health orders to close bars in Orange County if, in his medical opinion, it is appropriate to do so."

"Throughout our pandemic response, and in our phased reopening, we have consistently stated that we would closely monitor the data and correct course as needed," she said. "I, and my colleagues on the Orange County Board of Supervisors, remain dedicated to protecting the health and safety of our residents."

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Times staff writers Colleen Shalby, Luke Money, Iris Lee, Andy Roberson and Paul Sisson of the San Diego Union-Tribune contributed to this report.

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CALIFORNIA

After record-breaking day of coronavirus cases, California surpasses 6,000 deaths



A jogger in a protective mask passes L.A. Live in downtown Los Angeles. (Allen J. Schaben / Los Angeles Times)

By COLLEEN SHALBY | STAFF WRITER

JUNE 30, 2020 | 11:26 AM **UPDATED** 1:43 PM

Three months after Gov. Gavin Newsom issued an unprecedented statewide stay-at-home order designed to stem the spread of the coronavirus, California recorded a new grim milestone: passing the threshold of [6,000 coronavirus-related deaths](#).

Tuesday's news came one day after the state recorded its highest single-day count of COVID-19 cases. Monday's tally of [more than 8,000 infections](#) broke the state's daily record for the third time in eight days.

CALIFORNIA

July 4 will be a do-or-die moment for California as coronavirus rages

June 30, 2020

The enormous surge in cases, which now total more than 223,900 statewide, has prompted New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo to order anyone traveling to the state from California — and 15 other states that have seen recent spikes — to self-quarantine for 14 days.

The California increase is not simply the result of expanded testing capacity, officials have said.

The growing rate of positive infections and [a spike in hospitalizations](#) are proof the virus is spreading within communities. Health officials have attributed the rising numbers to a combination of events: the further reopening of many businesses, mass protests over [the death of George Floyd](#) and clusters of private gatherings.

“We’ve been very clear — this shouldn’t surprise anybody watching — as you reopen the economy, as we move away and make the meaningful modifications which we did to our stay-at-home order, you’re going to see people mixing that were not mixing in the past,” Newsom said during a news conference Monday.

Newsom says the state will make an announcement Wednesday on efforts to “toggle back” on the current health order. The announcement will include tighter restrictions related to the July 4 weekend; Newsom says holiday gatherings are a major concern.

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“If you’re not going to stay home and you’re not going to wear masks in public, we have to enforce [rules],” he said Tuesday.

In the months since the pandemic struck the U.S., nothing in the fight against the virus has

changed except people's social behaviors, experts say. The state is now [closely monitoring](#) 19 counties for surges in cases — which recently have skewed toward younger residents — and hospitalizations, which still largely affect older residents and those with underlying health conditions.

CALIFORNIA

Rising infections in younger people fuel California's new coronavirus spike

June 26, 2020

Some counties, including several in the Bay Area, have begun to step back their reopening efforts.

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Los Angeles County was one of seven counties ordered Sunday by the state to close its bars. On Monday, local officials announced that [beaches would be closed](#) over the July 4 weekend, a little over a month after reopening ahead of Memorial Day weekend. The county also has banned fireworks displays over the holiday.

Sheriff Alex Villanueva said in a tweet the Sheriff's Department would enforce beach parking violations over the three-day weekend and that beaches would be patrolled.

[L.A. County](#) health officials now estimate that 1 in 140 people are unknowingly infected with the coronavirus, a massive increase since last week's projection of 1 in 400. With that in mind, Health Services Director Dr. Christina Ghaly said that officials were preparing for a surge in hospitalizations and an "increase in mortality" in the coming weeks.

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Officials had warned of the possibility of a spike in cases with a resurgence in activity, but they weren't prepared for the speed at which the jump would occur.

"What we didn't expect was to see this steep an increase this quickly," Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer said Monday, following L.A. County's highest single-day tally of cases, which brought the county [past 100,000 infections](#).

CALIFORNIA COVID-19 PANDEMIC



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Colleen Shalby is a reporter for the Los Angeles Times. She previously worked at PBS NewsHour in Washington, D.C. She's a graduate of George Washington University and a native of Southern California.

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State Sen. Richard Pan speaks to fellow lawmakers in Sacramento, Calif.

California bill would shield health officer addresses as death threats rise

Health officials struggling to contain the coronavirus have at times faced an intense backlash in California.

By **JEREMY B. WHITE** | 06/30/2020 09:19 PM EDT | Updated 06/30/2020 10:23 PM EDT

OAKLAND — California would shield public health officers' home addresses under new legislation that emerged Tuesday after the long-unknown officials faced death threats this year for imposing coronavirus requirements.

State Sen. Richard Pan (D-Sacramento), a physician often aligned with health care professionals, has completely rewritten Senate Bill 483 to protect the privacy of public health officers, who hold immense power as they determine how far their counties can go in reopening.

Health officials struggling to contain the coronavirus have at times faced an intense backlash in California, including death threats and protests outside their homes for imposing or keeping restrictions. Most recently, Los Angeles County Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer went public last week with a series of physical threats she has received for maintaining a stay-at-home order for 10 million residents.

Others have resigned in the face of public pressure, as Orange County's Nichole Quick did this month after facing personal threats for imposing a face covering order. County officials subsequently withdrew the mask requirement but Gov. Gavin Newsom later imposed the same rule statewide in most public settings.

At least seven public health officers have left their posts during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Pan decried threats on public health officials as "appalling" in an interview and compared the safeguard he's seeking to the privacy afforded to judges so their rulings "will not be unduly influenced by threats."

"It says something about our own society when we have public servants who we hire for their expertise needing protection because they're being subjected to personal threats as a way to try and sway them to change their recommendations," Pan said.

The measure would add public health officers to a lengthy list of public officials for whom the Department of Motor Vehicles is prohibited from disclosing home addresses, which includes elected officials and law enforcement.



NEWS • News

Businesses would get \$25,000 tax credit for coronavirus safety measures under new bill

Rep. Harley Rouda's proposal would also help nonprofits and local governments recover funds used to buy masks, plexiglass and more.





The cost of plexiglass shields, installed between the cashier and the customer at a Vons Supermarket in Garden Grove, CA, could be covered by a proposed new tax credit. (Photo by Jeff Gritchen, Orange County Register/SCNG)

By **BROOKE STAGGS** | bstaggs@scng.com | Orange County Register

PUBLISHED: June 30, 2020 at 3:24 p.m. | UPDATED: June 30, 2020 at 5:44 p.m.

Small businesses, nonprofits and local governments could get reimbursed up to \$25,000 a year for money spent on safety measures to protect employees and customers from the coronavirus if a new tax credit introduced by Orange County congressman Harley Rouda becomes law.

On Tuesday, Rouda, D-Laguna Beach, and GOP Rep. Brian Mast of Florida introduced the Helping Businesses Reopen Safely Act of 2020, proposing a payroll tax credit that businesses could use to recover 90% of what they spend on masks, plexiglass barriers, disinfectants or other equipment federal authorities deem appropriate to help stop the spread of the pandemic.

Under the bill, businesses with fewer than 500 employees would be eligible for the credit.

“These businesses are already under financial strain from the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic,” said Vere Chappell, an accountant whose Mobile Tax Service has prepared tax returns in Orange County and surrounding areas for more than a decade.

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“So any assistance that would help them to survive and to protect their customers and employees is a win-win.”

Rouda’s office has heard from a number of local business owners who said the cost of protective gear is a huge burden at a time when some have been closed or operating with severely reduced revenue since March.

“States and local governments have given shops and restaurants the green light for reopening but

have failed to provide businesses with the resources they need to open safely,” Rouda said.

“Small business owners should not be financially penalized for providing safe and clean service.”

Business advocates say PPE expenditures pose an unexpected challenge during a period when many businesses are already struggling.

“It wasn’t part of your business plan, that’s for sure,” said Reuben Franco, president of the Orange County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Lucy Dunn, president of the Orange County Business Council, which backs the bill, said the tax credit would reward businesses for spending to keep employees and customers safe.

The tax credit also could incentivize businesses to go even further in trying to make their facilities safe if they know they’ll be reimbursed for the costs, said Steve Rosansky, president of the Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce. He cited some restaurants in Newport Beach, for example, that have installed extensive barriers or retrofitted bathrooms to make them touch-free.

Business should already be able to deduct many of these costs from their taxes next year. But Rosansky noted that a deduction only potentially reduces a business’ taxable income, while the tax credit pitched by Rouda and Mast would directly lower a company’s payroll tax bill, dollar-for-dollar, on spending to fight the spread of coronavirus.

Some business owners have expressed frustration that, even if they were able to get one of the loans established by the \$2 trillion CARES Act, it didn’t allow them to use those funds to buy personal protective gear. The window for those loans closed Tuesday, and accountant Chappell said many of his clients have already exhausted any federal benefits they’ve received.

That’s why, along with passing the Helping Businesses Reopen Safely Act, Franco said businesses

are hoping another round of federal stimulus help might be on the way.

“I think most of these original ones were just to help people survive,” he said. “But what do we do to recover?”

Democrats included additional business relief measures in the \$3 trillion HEROES Act, which the House of Representatives approved May 15. But the GOP-controlled Senate has largely panned the bill, leaving it dead on arrival.

In the meantime, Rosansky said people need to feel safe if they’re going to start returning to shops, restaurants and other businesses.

“I think that the No. 1 thing governments can do now is to mandate the wearing of masks and provide some type of minimum enforcement,” Rosansky said.

With masks now shown to be effective in reducing the spread of the virus and keeping case counts down, Rosansky said more masks means less chance governments will close businesses down again. So he said people who want to support small businesses need “to take one for team humanity” and wear face coverings.

As for Rouda’s Helping Businesses Reopen Safely Act, it will head first to the House’s Ways and Means Committee, which oversees taxes.

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NEWS • News

Coronavirus: Newsom plans to issue statewide mask enforcement regulations

California Gov. Gavin Newsom said the state will issue guidance regarding the enforcement of wearing face coverings ahead of the July 4 holiday





Gov. Gavin Newsom wears a protective mask on his face while speaking to reporters at Miss Ollie's restaurant during the coronavirus outbreak in Oakland, Calif., Tuesday, June 9, 2020. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu, Pool)

By **KERRY CROWLEY** | kcrowley@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group

PUBLISHED: June 30, 2020 at 3:52 p.m. | UPDATED: June 30, 2020 at 3:52 p.m.



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Gov. Gavin Newsom said he plans to issue statewide regulations on Wednesday regarding the enforcement of California's mandate that people wear face coverings while in public or high-risk settings.



During his Tuesday press briefing, Newsom hinted he will count on local municipalities to enforce the state's mask order, which was issued June 18.

"We'll be doing more to focus on enforcement in this state," Newsom said. "Enforcement comes in many different shapes. Primarily local enforcement."

Newsom said the state has financial resources to step up enforcement of the order in counties or cities where local officials choose not to comply.

"We have conditioned \$2.5 billion in our state budget on applying the spirit and the letter of the law as it relates to health directives at the county level," Newsom said. "If local officials are unwilling to enforce and are being dismissive, we will condition the distribution of those dollars. Again, \$2.5 billion."

Newsom indicated that it's no coincidence the state is stepping up its plans to enforce the mask order ahead of the July 4 holiday weekend as state officials are particularly concerned about the spread and transmission of COVID-19 at family gatherings.

The governor said people have a tendency to "let down their guard" in the presence of their extended family and expressed concern over the potential for an uptick in positive tests following a weekend where people will gather.

"We're going to need to do more expressing our concern about that, messaging more about the seriousness of face coverings and physical distancing and being a little bit more aggressive with regard to guidelines for the 4th of July," Newsom said.

Citing data compiled by the California Department of Public Health, Newsom said the positivity rate from coronavirus tests in California has increased from 4.4% two weeks ago to 5.6% over the last 14 days. He also noted the positivity rate has climbed to 5.9% over the last seven days and said he soon expects to add four counties to the 19 that are already on a state watch list.

Newsom said the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) will also play a role in the state’s enforcement of the mask order.

“There are financial conditions, there’s regulatory oversight, there’s code oversight, all of those things are part of our overall efforts,” Newsom said. “OSHA is now very active in this space. Alcohol Beverage Control is very active in this space and just moments ago, we’ll be making a more formal and detailed announcement on enforcement tomorrow.”

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A National Mask Mandate Could Save The U.S. Economy \$1 Trillion, Goldman Sachs Says



Sarah Hansen Forbes Staff

Markets

I cover breaking news.

Updated Jun 30, 2020, 10:24pm EDT

TOPLINE As mask-wearing becomes a political flashpoint—despite coronavirus cases spiking to record levels across the country—new research from Goldman Sachs suggests a national mask mandate would slow the growth rate of new coronavirus infections and prevent a 5% GDP loss caused by additional lockdown measures.



KEY FACTS

- Goldman's analysts found that wearing face coverings has a significant impact on coronavirus outcomes, and they suggest that a federal mask mandate would "meaningfully" increase mask usage across the country, especially in states like Florida and Texas, where masks are not currently required.
- The researchers estimate that a national mandate would increase the portion of people wearing masks by 15 percentage points, and cut the daily growth of new cases by 1.0 percentage point to 0.6%.
- Reducing the spread of the virus through mask-wearing, the analysts found, could be a substitute for strict lockdown measures that would otherwise shave 5%—or \$1 trillion—off the U.S. GDP.

CRUCIAL QUOTE

"If a face mask mandate meaningfully lowers coronavirus infections, it could be valuable not only from a public health perspective but also from an economic perspective because it could substitute for renewed lockdowns that would otherwise hit GDP," the researchers wrote.

KEY BACKGROUND

As coronavirus cases rise to record levels, prompting some states to pause or walk back their reopening plans, many lawmakers have called for a national mask mandate. Presumptive presidential nominee Joe Biden said that if he's elected, he would [use federal power](#) to require all Americans to wear masks in public places. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has also voiced her support for the practice: "Real men wear masks," she said earlier this month. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo has also called for an executive order mandating that everyone wear masks in public, suggesting that President Trump—who has

downplayed the importance of masks and [dismissed suggestions](#) that he wear one—should lead by example.

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[Top Democrats Push For Nationwide Mask Mandate, Trump Pushes Back](#) (*Forbes*)

[Mask Wars: As Mandates Grow—And Coronavirus Cases Surge—Some Conservatives Push Back](#) (*Forbes*)

[Masks Help Stop The Spread Of Coronavirus, Studies Say—But Wearing Them Still A Political Issue](#) (*Forbes*)

[Tired Of Wearing A Face Mask In Public? New Research Underscores Why You Still Need To](#) (*Forbes*)

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CORONAVIRUS

National mandate on mask-wearing could work better than lockdowns, new report suggests

"A national mask mandate could increase U.S. face mask usage by statistically significant and economically large amounts," the report concluded.



— A customer wears a protective mask as he receives a haircut at Ace of Cuts barbershop on June 22, 2020, in New York City. John Minchillo / AP

June 30, 2020, 1:00 PM PDT

By Ben Popken

A national mask mandate could be more effective than lockdowns, and could save the U.S. from a 5 percent hit to economic growth, according to a new report from investment giant Goldman

Sachs.

“Our baseline estimate is that a national mandate could raise the percentage of people who wear masks by 15 percentage points and cut the daily growth rate of confirmed cases by 1 percentage point,” Jan Hatzius, Goldman’s chief economist, wrote in the note to clients.

“These calculations imply that a face mask mandate could potentially substitute for lockdowns that would otherwise subtract nearly 5 percent from GDP,” Hatzius continued.

The new analysis comes as cases of COVID-19 are [rising sharply](#) in [Sun Belt states](#), including those that pursued an accelerated timeline for phased reopening.

The researchers analyzed the impact the introduction of masks had on infections and fatalities in the U.S. after state mandates went into effect, and across countries, comparing when mask mandates started and when masks began to be used. They found mask usage was associated with better overall outcomes.

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“A national mask mandate could increase US face mask usage by statistically significant and economically large amounts, especially in states such as Florida and Texas that currently don’t have a comprehensive mandate and are seeing some of the worst outbreaks,” Jan Hatzius, Goldman’s chief economist, wrote in the note to clients.

The report cautioned their findings are based on several different combined statistics that have errors in measurements.

It also acknowledged that mask wearing has become a political and cultural statement and that the reality of a national mask mandate was “uncertain.”

“However, even in the absence of a national mandate, state and local authorities might well broaden mandates in ways that ultimately mimic the impact of a national mandate,” the researchers wrote. “Either way, our analysis suggests that the economy could benefit significantly from such moves, especially when compared with the alternative of a return to broader lockdowns.”



Ben Popken



Ben Popken is a senior business reporter for NBC News.



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CALIFORNIA

Huntington Beach restaurant's no-mask position deeply divides O.C. diners



A Gadsden flag flies at Basilico's Pasta e Vino in Huntington Beach on Tuesday. (Kevin Chang / Times Community News)

By [SARA CARDINE](#) | STAFF WRITER

JUNE 30, 2020 | 11:06 PM

With Orange County coronavirus [infections increasing](#), even as businesses and restaurants operate with varying levels of compliance to pandemic guidelines, residents are becoming vigilant about where they will and won't spend their hard-earned cash.

So when the Huntington Beach restaurant Basilico's Pasta e Vino took to [social media](#) to proclaim its anti-mask sentiment using the hashtag *#nomasksallowed*, controversy ensued among diners who pledged never to patronize the establishment again and those who supported the viewpoint.

An image posted recently on the restaurant's Facebook page portrays illustrated mask wearers with big red lines drawn through them, along with *#nomasksallowed* and *#securitymatters*. Another image, the Gadsden flag with its signature "Don't Tread on Me" superimposed over an American flag, was posted to the page on Monday.

The posts have inspired hundreds of angry and supportive comments from a deeply divided populace along with a groundswell of media attention, according to Basilico's Operations Manager Jonathan Millikan, who was compiling a media contacts list as he greeted guests Tuesday.

NEWS

Orange County beach cities make plans for Fourth of July amid pandemic

June 30, 2020

Millikan said he had no comment about the postings or whether customers were being asked to remove their masks before entering Basilico's. The manager did say restaurant owners were seeking help from "spokespeople," who would be contacting news outlets sometime in the next few days.

"We've decided we're going to reach out to everyone. We may end up holding a conference — that's kind of our plan," Millikan said.

Angry commenters are also going to the user-review website Yelp.com to share arguments they've had with the owners, who Millikan acknowledged sometimes use his social media accounts when corresponding with the public.

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Some of the posted conversations have since been removed, while in others, the owners explain how they initially posted a "no masks" sign outside the restaurant weeks earlier in response to demonstrations against racial inequality and police brutality that took place in and around Huntington Beach.

"If you enter the restaurant for dine in and want to wear a mask, you must remove it when sitting down," one June 27 comment explained. "If you are standing around inside and waiting for a table ... and you are wearing a mask, you will be asked to wait outside. Got it? And next time you have something to say, why don't you come by and tell us to our face, in person?"

On Tuesday, [Yelp](#) said the business “is being monitored by Yelp’s support team for [content](#) related to media reports.” A trendline of Basilico’s online reviews showed a steep decrease in performance from May to June.

Huntington Beach spokeswoman Catherine Jun said she was unable to comment on whether the issue had been brought to the city’s attention but would not say why.

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Jun did say the Huntington Beach Police Department, which is responsible for conducting “educational outreach to non-compliant businesses,” had been made aware of the situation.

Cardine writes for Times Community News.

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Sara Cardine covers the city of Costa Mesa for the Daily Pilot. She comes from the La Cañada Valley Sun, where she spent six years as the news reporter covering La Cañada Flintridge and recently received a first-place Public Service Journalism award from the California News Publishers Assn. She’s also worked at the Pasadena Weekly, Stockton Record and Lodi-News Sentinel, which instilled in her a love for community news. (714) 966-4627

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This essential worker wanted a coronavirus test. She ended up with a \$1,840 bill



Carmen Quintero works as a supervisor at a distribution center for N95 masks. She came down with COVID-19-like symptoms March 23 but couldn't get a test. She owes \$1,840 for other care she received when she had "suspected COVID." (Heidi de Marco/KHN)

By SARAH VARNEY | KAISER HEALTH NEWS

JUNE 30, 2020 | 1:20 PM

Carmen Quintero works an early shift as a supervisor at a 3M distribution warehouse that ships N95 masks to a nation under siege from the coronavirus. On March 23, she had developed a severe cough, and her voice, usually quick and enthusiastic, was barely a whisper.

A human resources staff member told Quintero she needed to go home.

"They told me I couldn't come back until I was tested," said Quintero, who was also told that she would need to document that she didn't have the virus.

Her primary care doctor directed her to the nearest emergency room for testing because the practice had no coronavirus tests.

The Corona Regional Medical Center is just around the corner from her house in Corona, Calif., and there a nurse tested her breathing and gave her a chest X-ray. But the hospital didn't have any tests either, and the nurse told her to go to Riverside County's Public Health Department. There, a public health worker gave her an 800 number to call to schedule a test. The earliest the county could test her was April 7, more than two weeks later.

At the hospital, Quintero got a doctor's note saying she should stay home from work for a week, and she was told to behave as if she had COVID-19, isolating herself from vulnerable household members. That was difficult — Quintero lives with her grandmother and her girlfriend's parents — but she managed. No one else in her home got sick, and by the time April 7 came, she felt better and decided not to get the coronavirus test.

Then the bill came.

The patient: Carmen Quintero, 35, a supervisor at a 3M distribution warehouse who lives in Corona, Calif. She has an Anthem Blue Cross health insurance plan through her job with a \$3,500 annual deductible.

Total bill: Corona Regional Medical Center billed Quintero \$1,010, and Corona Regional Emergency Medical Associates billed an additional \$830 for physician services. She also paid \$50 at Walgreens to fill a prescription for an inhaler.

Service provider: Corona Regional Medical Center, a for-profit hospital owned by Universal Health Services, a company based in King of Prussia, Penn., which is one of the largest healthcare management companies in the nation. The hospital contracts with Corona Regional Emergency Medical Associates, part of [Emergent Medical Associates](#).

Medical service: Quintero was evaluated in the emergency room for symptoms consistent with COVID-19: a wracking cough and difficulty breathing. She had a chest X-ray and a breathing treatment and was prescribed an inhaler.

What gives: On that day in late March when her body shook from coughing, Quintero's immediate worry was infecting her family, especially her girlfriend's parents, both over 65, and her 84-year-old grandmother.

"If something was to happen to them, I don't know if I would have been able to live with it," said Quintero.

Quintero wanted to isolate in a hotel, but she could hardly afford to for the week that she stayed home. She had only three paid sick days and was forced to take vacation time until her symptoms subsided and she was allowed back at work. At the time, few places provided publicly funded hotel rooms for sick people to isolate, and Quintero was not offered any help.

For her medical care, Quintero knew she had a high-deductible plan yet felt she had no choice but to follow her doctor's advice and go to the nearest emergency room to get tested. She



Carmen Quintero, right, still tries to keep a safe distance from her grandmother, Teresa Carapia, and two other family members over 65. Quintero says she worried about them as she tried to self-isolate with COVID-19-like symptoms. (Heidi de Marco/KHN)

assumed she would get the test and not have to pay. Congress had passed the CARES Act [just the week before](#), with headlines saying coronavirus [testing would be free](#).

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That legislation turned out to be riddled with loopholes, especially for people like Quintero who needed and wanted a coronavirus test but couldn't get one early in the pandemic.

"I just didn't think it was fair because I went in there to get tested," she said.

Some [insurance companies are voluntarily reducing copayments](#) for COVID-19-related emergency room visits. Quintero said her insurer, Anthem Blue Cross, would not reduce her bill. Anthem would not discuss the case until Quintero signed its own privacy waiver; it would not accept a signed standard waiver Kaiser Health News uses. The hospital would not discuss the bill with a reporter unless Quintero could also be on the phone, something that has yet to be arranged around Quintero's workday, which begins at 4 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m.

[Three states](#) have gone further than Congress to waive cost sharing for testing and diagnosis of pneumonia and influenza, given these illnesses are often mistaken for COVID-19. California is not one of them, and because Quintero's employer is self-insured — the company pays for health services directly from its own funds — it is exempt from state directives anyway. The U.S. Department of Labor regulates all self-funded insurance

plans. In 2019, [nearly 2 in 3 covered workers](#) were in these types of plans.

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Resolution: As lockdown restrictions ease and coronavirus cases rise around the country, public health officials say quickly isolating sick people before the virus spreads through families is essential.

But isolation efforts have gotten little attention in the U.S. Nearly all local health departments, including Riverside County, where Quintero lives, now have these programs, according to the National Assn. of County and City Health Officials. Many were designed to shelter people experiencing homelessness but can be used to isolate others.

Raymond Niaura, interim chairman of the Department of Epidemiology at New York University, said these programs are used inconsistently and have been poorly promoted to the public.

“No one has done this before and a lot of what’s happening is that people are making it up as they go along,” said Niaura. “We’ve just never been in a circumstance like this.”

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Quintero still worries about bringing the virus home to her family and fears being in the same room with her grandmother. Quintero returns from work every day now, puts her clothes in a separate hamper and diligently washes her hands before she interacts with anyone.

The bills have been another constant worry. Quintero called the hospital and her insurance company and complained that she should not have to pay since she was seeking a test on her doctor’s orders. Neither budged, and the bills labeled “payment reminders” soon became “final notices.” She reluctantly agreed to pay \$100 a month toward her balance — \$50 to the hospital and \$50 to the doctors.

“None of them wanted to work with me,” Quintero said. “I just have to give the first payment on each bill so they wouldn’t send me to collections.”

The takeaway: If you suspect you have COVID-19 and need to isolate to protect vulnerable members of your household, call your local public health department. Most counties have isolation and quarantine programs, but these resources are not well known.

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You may be placed in a hotel, recreational vehicle or other type of housing while you wait out the infection period. You do not need to have a positive COVID-19 test to qualify for these programs and can use these programs while you await your test result. But this is an area in which public health officials repeatedly offer clear guidance — 14 days of isolation — which most people find impossible to follow.

At this point in the pandemic, tests are more widely available and federal law is very clearly on your side: You should not be charged any cost sharing for a coronavirus test.

Be wary, though, if your doctor directs you to the emergency room for a test, because any additional care you get there could come at a high price. Ask if there are any other testing sites available.

LIFESTYLE

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If you do find yourself with a big bill related to suspected COVID-19, push beyond a telephone call with your insurance company and file a formal appeal. If you feel comfortable, ask your employer’s human resources staff to argue on your behalf. Then, call the help line for your state insurance commissioner and file a separate appeal. Press insurers — and big companies that offer self-insured plans — to follow the spirit of the

law, even if the letter of the law seems to let them off the hook.

Bill of the Month is a crowdsourced investigation by [Kaiser Health News](#) and [NPR](#) that dissects and explains medical bills. Do you have an interesting medical bill you want to share with us? [Tell us about it!](#)

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Sarah Varney

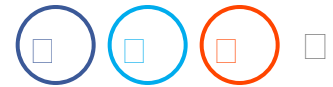
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LOCAL NEWS • News

Riverside Art Museum delays reopening due to coronavirus





The Riverside Art Museum partnered with Google Arts to offer some of its exhibits online. (File photo by Cindy Yamanaka, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)

By **RYAN HAGEN** | rhagen@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise

PUBLISHED: June 29, 2020 at 6:08 p.m. | UPDATED: June 30, 2020 at 10:07 a.m.



Rising coronavirus cases and hospitalizations have delayed the reopening of the Riverside Art Museum.

County orders gave the museum permission to reopen June 12, but the museum said at the time that it would instead continue adding protections so it could have a soft reopening Thursday, July 2, and fully reopen after that.

That no longer seems safe, the museum announced in a newsletter Friday, June 26.

“We would love to reopen to share the joy, hope, and peace that art can provide, but not at the risk of our staff and visitors,” the newsletter says.

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of 365 Monday, June 29. Of those patients, 106 were in intensive care and the county had five empty ICU beds entering Monday.

Online exhibits, which are updated every Saturday, and online classes are available.

Information: <http://riversideartmuseum.org>.

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LOCAL NEWS • News

Riverside County sets another one-day coronavirus case record; sees 17 more deaths



By **JEFF HORSEMAN** | jhorseman@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise
PUBLISHED: June 30, 2020 at 3:20 p.m. | UPDATED: June 30, 2020 at 11:51 p.m.



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Riverside County set a new record for the biggest one-day jump in the number of new coronavirus cases while the its COVID-19 death toll rose by 17 to 457 in the Tuesday, June 30, update on the

county public health website.

The county also saw a new high in COVID-19 hospitalizations, which climbed from 365 on Monday, June 29, to 403 on Tuesday, a 10% jump and up 28% from a week ago. Of those 403, 109 patients are in intensive care — another high mark.

Riverside County now has 17,296 confirmed cases, up 662 cases — about 4% — from Monday. Updates posted weekdays on the public health website usually reflect diagnoses and deaths that happened over a span of days as it takes time for that information to reach the public health department.

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As of Monday, 96.1% of all the county's licensed intensive care unit beds were in use, down from 98.7% on Sunday. COVID-19 patients account for roughly 30% of all ICU beds in use, and hospitals can convert regular beds to ICU beds if needed.



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Five of those hospitalized are from Imperial County and 13 in county hospitals are state prison inmates. COVID-19 patients account for 10.1% of all hospital patients in the county and 172 ventilators were being used, with 506 available as of Monday.

The three state prisons in Riverside County have 421 active cases, according to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Of those three, Chuckawalla Valley State Prison outside Blythe has the most cases with 291. A second Chuckawalla inmate died Sunday from what appears to be complications from the virus, state corrections officials reported.

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Officially, 7,854 in the county have recovered from the virus, up 2.4% from Monday. Official recoveries are defined as those who are no longer in isolation, show no symptoms and have had their public health cases closed.

Almost 231,000 COVID-19 tests have been administered in the county, up 3.6% from Monday. Tuesday's 8,096 new test results is a one-day record, and the average of almost 5,300 test results per day for the past seven days is a record as well.

To see a full list of community-by-community cases, [click here](#).

Staff Writer Nikie Johnson contributed to this report.

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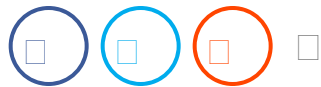


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LOCAL NEWS • News

Riverside County's progress in coronavirus fight has been lost, official warns



By **JEFF HORSEMAN** | jhorseman@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise

PUBLISHED: June 30, 2020 at 1:06 p.m. | UPDATED: June 30, 2020 at 1:09 p.m.



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Recent increases in cases and hospitalizations from the novel coronavirus have erased Riverside County's progress against the disease and "the curve is no longer flat," the county's public health officer said Tuesday, June 30, as he warned that more closures could be on the horizon if residents don't cover their faces and practice social distancing.

Dr. Cameron Kaiser also defended his order issued Monday, June 29, closing bars and breweries until further notice unless they sell food with alcohol, a move that came at Gov. Gavin Newsom's recommendation. Cases started to "climb substantially" several days after county bars and other

businesses were cleared to reopen June 12, he told the Riverside County Board of Supervisors.

Bars are among the toughest place for county workers known as contact tracers to track infections because people come in and out of them so often, Kaiser said during a board meeting that was held via videoconference after several county employees tested positive for COVID-19.

Kim Saruwatari, county public health director, also mentioned reports of behavior at bars that could spread the virus, such as people clustering together, a lack of social distancing, and bar patrons not wearing face coverings and speaking loudly “because it’s a loud environment.”

The bar closure order will be enforced, Kaiser said, and those who violate it risk losing their liquor license.

Like much of California, Riverside County has seen COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations spike since the start of June. The county is now on the state’s coronavirus watch list, and countywide, almost 100% of licensed intensive care unit beds are full — COVID-19 patients fill roughly one in four of those beds — forcing some hospitals to convert regular beds to handle the surge.

Saruwatari said the county has roughly 202 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 residents. The state red flags counties with rates above 100 per 100,000. Since early June, the county’s percentage of coronavirus tests coming back positive has been consistently higher than the state threshold of 8% and the positive rate reached 12.3% on June 26, Saruwatari said.

In May, the county made enough progress that the state put it on a path to reopening more quickly as part of a plan to reopen businesses closed since Newsom imposed a statewide stay-at-home order March 19 to limit COVID-19’s spread.

Now, “we are now at the point where our hospitalizations and ICU rates are higher than they have ever been previously during this pandemic, which has erased all of our gains and the curve is no longer flat,” Kaiser said.

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Besides bars, Kaiser mentioned recent protests and private gatherings since Memorial Day as a factor in the recent surge. “Many (protesters) did wear face coverings and distance appropriately as recommended, but many did not,” he said.

Saruwatari said that while there have been a few COVID-19 clusters at restaurants, big-box stores, and plants packaging salads and dates, “the majority of our cases are really groups of people who are coming together. They’re not social distancing. They’re not wearing face coverings. They’re together for more than 15 minutes at a time.”

Many of these people aren’t showing symptoms, she said.

“So it’s the family barbecues, it’s the having some friends over because it’s been a long time since you’ve seen them. And it’s that close contact with people that’s really leading to — what we feel is leading to the increase in cases that we’re seeing now.”

While the county continues to hire contact tracers to track down those who came into contact with an infected person, “we do not have a backlog in terms of contact tracing work,” Saruwatari said.

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Kaiser urged the public to do its part to control the disease, including abiding by a statewide face covering mandate and practicing social distancing.

“Yesterday in his remarks, the governor made a clear statement that other closures are being considered,” Kaiser said. “And if we fail to ... do what needs to be done safely, we may be in a position where if we don’t close things ourselves, the state will do it for us.”

Kaiser added: “We already have the tools to make our businesses safe and to continue to do our business as safely as possible and not put further individuals at risk. We need to continue doing so and if we can do that, I have full confidence that we will be able to beat back COVID-19.”

Tuesday's hearing also gave county officials a chance to address rumors about the virus's spread in the county, including what they called the falsehood that COVID-19 patients from Imperial County are overwhelming county hospitals and being airlifted in at night.

Bruce Barton, the county's emergency management director, noted that as of Monday, only five of the 365 COVID-19 patients hospitalized in Riverside County are from Imperial County. Riverside County hospitals only take Imperial County patients if there's room, he said, and the majority of those patients are transferred during the day by ground ambulance.

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Jeff Horseman | Reporter

Jeff Horseman got into journalism because he liked to write and stunk at math. He grew up in Vermont and he honed his interviewing skills as a supermarket cashier by asking Bernie Sanders "Paper or plastic?" After graduating from Syracuse University in 1999, Jeff began his journalistic odyssey at The Watertown Daily Times in upstate New York, where he impressed then-U.S. Senate candidate Hillary Clinton so much she called him "John" at the end of an interview. From there, he went to Annapolis, Maryland, where he covered city, county and state government at The Capital newspaper before love and the quest for snowless winters took him in 2007 to Southern California, where he started out covering Temecula for The Press-Enterprise. Today, Jeff writes about Riverside County government and regional politics. Along the way, Jeff has covered wildfires, a tropical storm, 9/11 and the Dec. 2 terror attack in San Bernardino. If you have a question or story idea about politics or the inner workings of government, please let Jeff know. He'll do his best to answer, even if it involves a little math.

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COVID Orange County update: Record high 779 new cases reported, 3 additional deaths

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Although the elderly are known to be among the most vulnerable in the fight against the coronavirus, more than half of the confirmed cases in Orange County are among people under the age of 44.

SANTA ANA, Calif. (KABC) -- Health officials on Tuesday reported 779 new coronavirus cases in Orange County, a record high for a single day, along with three additional deaths.

The county's total coronavirus case load stands at 13,843.

"While the report today - and the recent increased rate of infections - is concerning, the County and our local health system continue to be prepared to respond to protect the health and safety of our residents," Board of Supervisors Chair Michelle Steele said in a statement, noting that the county was the fourth in the state to declare a local emergency as early as February.

The interim county health officer is considering issuing a health order to close bars in Orange County "if, in his medical opinion, it is appropriate to do so," Steele said.

She strongly encouraged residents follow federal, state and local health guidelines, including wearing face coverings, regular hand washing and physical distancing.

Gov. Gavin Newsom said Monday that Orange County, along with Solano, Merced and Glenn counties, had been added to the state Department of Public Health's watch list due to increasing percentages of positive tests.

DEVELOPING: More details will be added to this report as they become available.

Stay up to date with [more coronavirus resources and the latest news](#)

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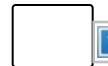
NEWS LOCAL NEWS • News

Orange County may close bars ahead of July 4th weekend, OC supervisor says



Customers gather at the Swallow's Inn bar on the first day they were allowed to reopen in San Juan Capistrano, CA, on Friday, June 12, 2020. Bars, gyms and pools were allowed to open today amid the continuing coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. (Photo by Jeff Gritchen, Orange County Register/SCNG)

By **ALICIA ROBINSON** | arobinson@scng.com and **ERIKA I. RITCHIE** | eritchie@scng.com | The Orange County Register



PUBLISHED: June 30, 2020 at 1:38 p.m. | UPDATED: June 30, 2020 at 7:39 p.m.

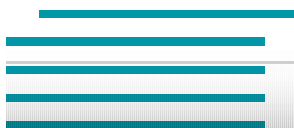
Laguna Beach city officials have decided to close their beach to crowds on the Fourth of July, while Orange County health officials are considering an order closing bars countywide after seeing steady and unrelenting increases in positive coronavirus tests and the number of people hospitalized with COVID-19, officials confirmed Tuesday, June 30.

The city is looking at using its full lifeguard staff, as well as police officers and seasonal workers to physically stand on the beaches and turn people away. If there is the need, the city manager can extend the planned beach closures to Friday and Sunday as well, City Council members said.

“To respect the health of residents and the health of the people in the county, we should close the beaches,” Councilwoman Toni Iseman said during the hours-long discussion.

Laguna Beach was also the first city in Orange County to close its beaches as part of the initial coronavirus shutdown in March.

TOP ARTICLES 1/5



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Also, Interim County Health Officer Dr. Clayton Chau “is considering the issuance of health orders to close bars in Orange County if, in his medical opinion, it is appropriate to do so,” Orange County Board of Supervisor Chairwoman Michelle Steel said in a news release.

Chau confirmed in a Tuesday afternoon news conference that “I am looking at the data and I am discussing with my county counsel, so yes, more to come” regarding a potential bar closing order. As of deadline Tuesday evening, no announcement had been made.

If the county issues an order shutting down bars, it would be in line with other counties in the region. Gov. Gavin Newsom on Sunday ordered bars closed in Los Angeles County and six other counties where the virus’ continued spread has officials concerned. Health officials in Riverside and San Diego counties chose on Monday to close their bars, and San Bernardino County officials were scheduled to discuss the issue at a special meeting on Tuesday.

In Orange County, the news – and the uncertainty – seem to be par for an extremely frustrating course for restaurateurs like Social owner Andrew Dorsey, who has locations in Costa Mesa and Huntington Beach.

With the rules for bars and restaurants changing frequently, “it’s the worst,” Dorsey said. “Not only do we have to plan for a new guideline or precaution every day,” but it took him weeks to rehire half of his staff and in the meantime, he’s been filling in as bartender, server, even cleaning bathrooms.

In other counties, bars with a food menu were allowed to remain open.

Dorsey had already opted to close his Costa Mesa restaurant so he can focus his resources on the beach location for what is likely to be a high-traffic holiday weekend.

After closing in March along with most other businesses, bars and clubs only opened again about two weeks ago, coming in one of the later stages of the state’s reopening plan.

Bars are considered to be a higher-risk environment for spreading the virus because they’re enclosed spaces that may be crowded, patrons remove their masks to drink, and they may be less likely to follow safety guidelines after they’ve had some alcohol.

If the order comes, it would be yet another blow to Huntington Beach’s Main Street Wine Company, which shut down voluntarily last week after sommelier and general manager Oscar Carrillo and another employee tested positive for COVID-19.

Carrillo, who is recovering at home, said that last week he waited on a group of longtime customers and as soon as they notified the restaurant some in their party were infected, the wine bar closed and got all employees tested; most were negative. They deep-cleaned the place Monday and reopened Tuesday.

While the state guidelines are stringent and not all of them make sense, Carrillo said he's seen a lot of bars and restaurants blatantly ignore them, packing in the crowds to try to make up for the money lost over the last few months.

Costa Mesa Mayor Katrina Foley said she's seen the same thing in her city's dining and drinking establishments, and she's worried they'll become a primary way the virus spreads.

"It's hit and miss whether they are enforcing social distancing and wearing face masks," Foley said. "Until we can see a little bit more discipline among the people who are patronizing (these places), we're going to continue to put these businesses at risk and put the public at risk."

Steel said in her release that everyone in Orange County is "strongly encouraged to follow guidelines as outlined by federal, state and local health officials, which include wearing face coverings, following good hygiene practices including regular hand washing, and adhering to social distancing."

Carrillo urged people to take the risk of infection seriously, saying he's desperate to finish his quarantine but also filled with anxiety.

"You're going to be stuck in a room not being able to get out, and hopefully you didn't get your mom and you didn't get your neighbor and you didn't get your best friend and his kid sick," he said. "All of these things were on my mind."

Foley said if the county can't start bringing down its case counts, she's afraid more businesses may have to close again – something nobody wants.

Dorsey worries that could crush the local restaurant industry:

"A lot of Orange County restaurants were able to make it out of the first lockdown, but I don't foresee a lot of restaurants making it out of the next one."

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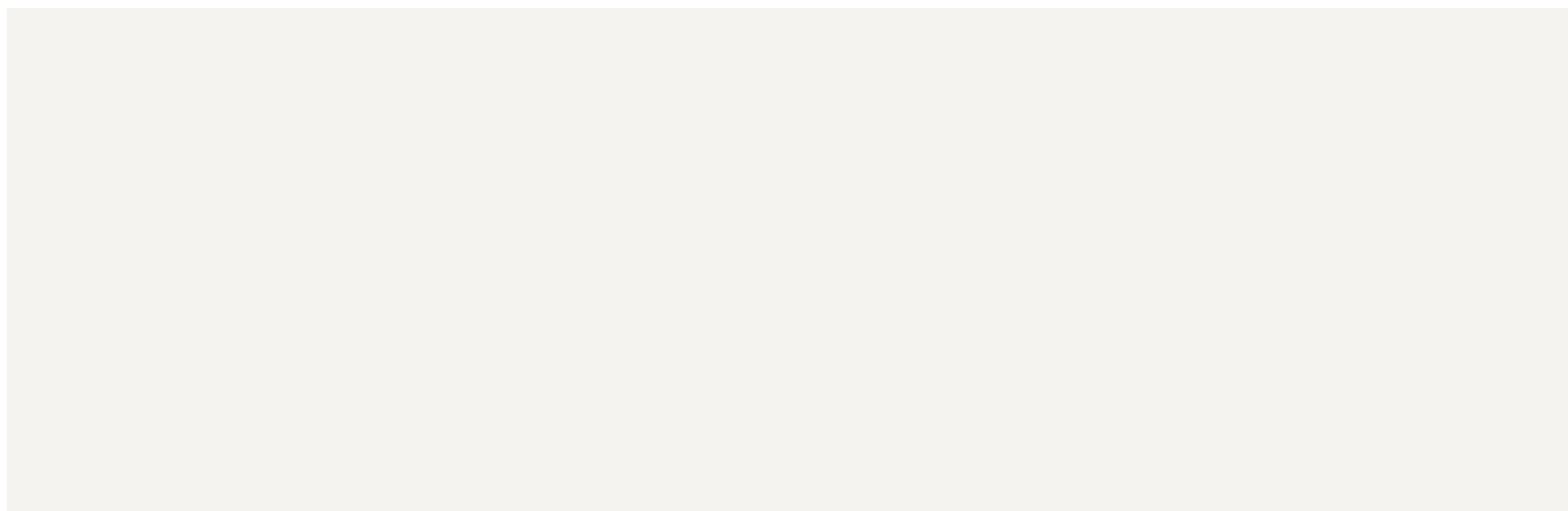
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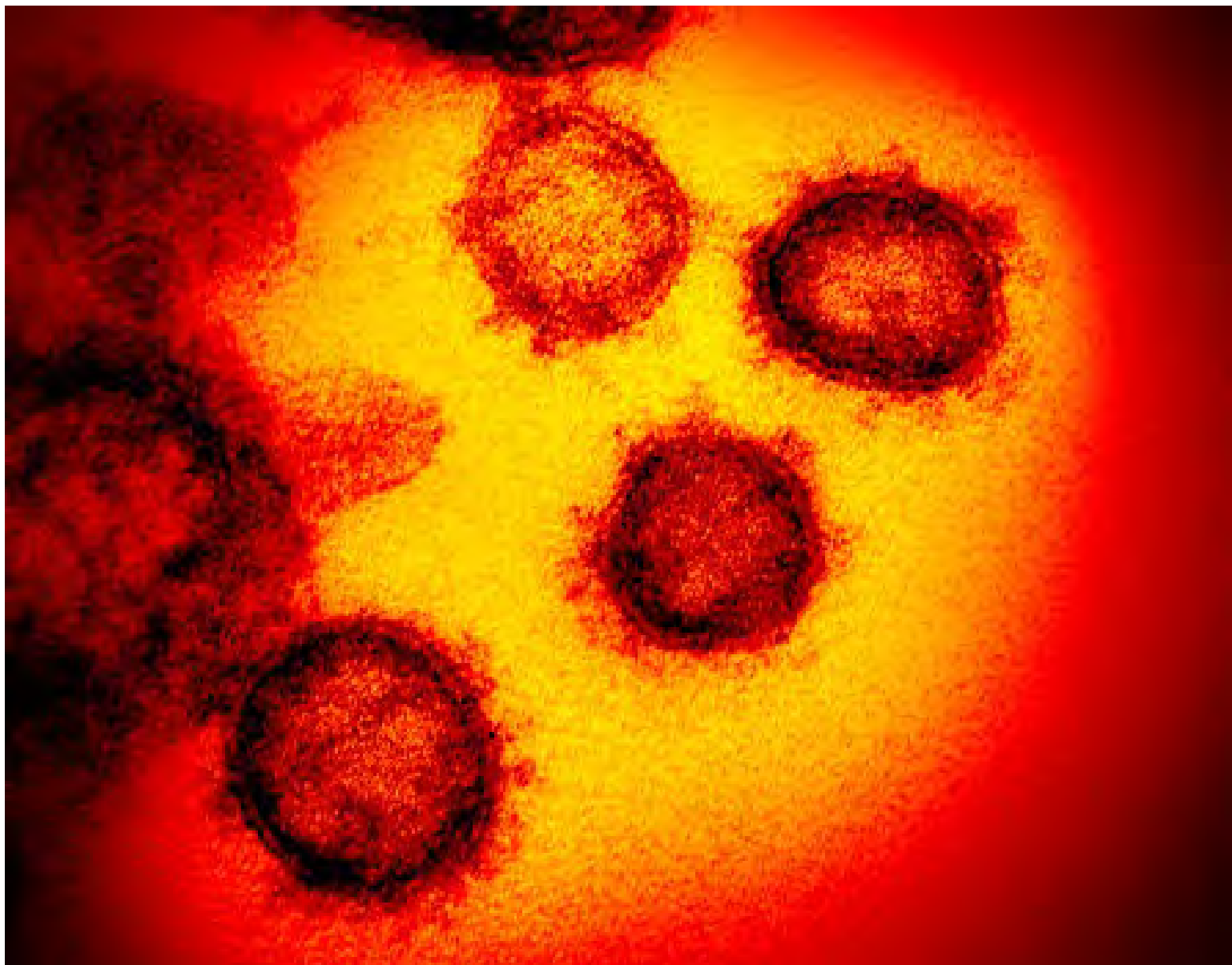
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NEWS • News

LA County reports 2,779 new coronavirus cases as renewed surge persists





This undated electron microscope image made available by the U.S. National Institutes of Health in February 2020 shows the Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. Also known as 2019-nCoV, the virus causes COVID-19. The sample was isolated from a patient in the U.S. On Tuesday, April 21, 2020, (NIAID-RML via AP)

By **DONNA LITTLEJOHN** | dlittlejohn@scng.com and **CITY NEWS SERVICE** | news@socalnews.com | Daily Breeze

PUBLISHED: June 30, 2020 at 4:38 p.m. | UPDATED: June 30, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

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Los Angeles County on Tuesday, June 30, reported 2,779 additional coronavirus cases, the fourth consecutive day the number topped 2,000 — as concerns mount about a new surge.

There were 1,783 people hospitalized as of Tuesday, with 26% in intensive care units and 18% on ventilators. The numbers are “significantly higher,” county officials said, than the 1,350 to 1,450 daily hospitalizations seen in recent weeks.

Tuesday’s case count, meanwhile, was slightly lower than the 2,903 reported Monday — the most for a single day in the county.

Overall, 103,529 people have tested positive for COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, since the pandemic began.

TOP ARTICLES 1/5

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Health officials on Tuesday also reported that another 45 people have died from coronavirus-related causes, bringing the countywide death toll to 3,369.

The report did not include updated numbers for Pasadena and Long Beach, which operate their own independent health departments.

Long Beach on Tuesday reported another two residents had died from coronavirus-related causes, bringing that city's death toll to 132. It also reported 321 additional cases, though the higher-than-usual number included data from Sunday and Monday; Long Beach has so far identified 4,120 cases of COVID-19.

Pasadena on Tuesday reported two additional deaths — bringing its death toll to 90. That city also reported 22 new cases, for a total of 1,328.

The numbers come as officials say there is a surge underway, prompting a host of new precautions being announced this week, including bars once again shuttering and beaches closed for the Fourth of July weekend.

“The LA County community needs to come together again to slow the spread of COVID-19, and we need to act with haste and urgency,” Barbara Ferrer, director of public health, said in a statement Tuesday. “The increases in cases and hospitalizations we are seeing will result in more deaths.

“It is on all of us, businesses and residents, to use all the tools we know to prevent further transmission of the virus,” she added. “Closely following all protocols for physical distancing, wearing cloth face coverings and washing hands frequently are crucial at this moment for preventing more serious illness and death from COVID-19.”

Gov. Gavin Newsom on Tuesday announced that he'd soon have more to say on a new “toggle back” on the stay-at-home order and the community reopening status.

Enforcement measures on wearing cloth masks in public also will come soon, he said..

“Tomorrow (Wednesday, July 1) we’ll be making some additional announcements on efforts to use that ‘dimmer switch’ that I’ve referred to and begin to toggle back on our stay at home order and tighten things up,” Newsom said. “The framework for us is this — if you’re not gonna stay home and you’re not gonna wear masks in public, we have to enforce, and we will and we’ll be making announcements on enforcement tomorrow.”

Newsom, though, didn’t indicate what types of changes might be in store ahead of the holiday weekend, but said additional restrictions were being pondered in response to continued rises in coronavirus case numbers, hospitalizations and positivity rates.

The number of people hospitalized across California due to the virus has risen 43% in the past two weeks, Newsom said, and the number of people in intensive care units has jumped by 37%.

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“You have a glass of water, and all of a sudden nieces and nephews start congregating around, jumping on top of Uncle Joe.”

Family gatherings are consistently a top concern for health officials across the state, the governor said, and California is “moving into a weekend when family gatherings are part of the tradition.” As a result, he said, the state will be “a little more aggressive” over the holiday to ensure health measures

Newsom ordered the closure of bars in Los Angeles and several other counties on Sunday, and recommended such closures in other areas. Thus far, Riverside and San Diego counties have both ordered bars closed.

But the governor said Tuesday that the bigger concern over the upcoming holiday weekend is family gatherings.

“Not just bars, not just (people) out in the streets, where people are protesting and the like,” he said. “It’s specifically family gatherings.”

Family gatherings, Newsom said, can include multiple households coming together — where they might “take down their guard.”

“They walk into that barbecue with masks on and they put the cooler down and the mask comes off,” Newsom said.

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Donna Littlejohn | reporter

Donna Littlejohn has covered the Harbor Area as a reporter since 1981. Along with development, politics, coyotes, battleships and crime, she writes features that have spotlighted an array of topics, from an alligator on the loose in a city park to the modern-day cowboys who own the trails on the Palos Verdes Peninsula. She loves border collies and Aussie dogs, cats, early California Craftsman architecture and most surviving old stuff. She imagines the 1970s redevelopment sweep that leveled so much of San Pedro's historic waterfront district as very sad.

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Los Angeles Times

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CALIFORNIA

Times sues L.A. County sheriff over withholding records on deputy misconduct



The Los Angeles Times has filed a lawsuit against Los Angeles County, alleging that the Sheriff's Department has repeatedly refused to turn over public records about deputies involved in misconduct or shootings. (Rick Sforza / Associated Press)

By [ALENE TCHEKMEDYIAN](#) | STAFF WRITER

JUNE 30, 2020 | 8:22 PM

The Los Angeles Times has filed a lawsuit against Los Angeles County, alleging that the Sheriff's Department has repeatedly refused to turn over public records, including those about deputies involved in misconduct or shootings.

The landmark [Senate Bill 1421](#) undid decades of secrecy 18 months ago by opening up previously confidential records about law enforcement officers involved in shootings or other serious uses of force, as well as those who committed sexual assaults or acts of dishonesty. And yet, the lawsuit says, L.A. County "continues to withhold records" on hundreds of deputies.

"The county and the Sheriff's Department are just continually refusing to provide access to these important records," said Kelly Aviles, an attorney representing The Times. "We've gotten almost nothing in the 18 months since we've filed those requests."

The Sheriff's Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

A county spokeswoman, however, said in a statement that L.A. County is "committed to fulfilling its responsibilities" under the California Public Records Act.

"Every department — including the Sheriff's Department — is expected to live up to the transparency that the law requires and the public has a right to expect," the statement said. "Beyond that, the county does not comment on pending litigation and will not

address the specific allegations in this lawsuit.”

The day that SB 1421 went into effect, The Times submitted various requests for information to the Sheriff’s Department.

According to the lawsuit, the Sheriff’s Department improperly denied most of them, saying they were too broad or otherwise exempt. It agreed to produce SB 1421 records only for deputies The Times could identify by name.

But even for the 325 deputies that The Times did identify by name, the county has produced “almost no records,” the lawsuit says.

The department has produced files “for just two deputies and responded that approximately 17 other deputies had no disclosable letters of discipline,” the lawsuit says. “Information about the other more than 300 officers specifically identified by The Times remains undisclosed.”

A number of other requests, including some filed by the reporter of this story, have been ignored or improperly denied, according to the lawsuit.

In October, The Times requested information about promotions within the department, in-custody jail deaths and Sheriff Alex Villanueva’s daily schedule. No records have been produced, the lawsuit says.

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Several months later, the paper requested the daily time sheets of every Sheriff’s Department employee who worked at the department’s Lost Hills station on Jan. 26, the day Kobe Bryant, his daughter and seven others were killed in a helicopter crash. That request was denied.

The Times also requested communications that reference the taking or sharing of photos

from the crash site by Sheriff's Department employees, as it was reporting that the agency [tried to keep a lid on allegations](#) that deputies shared graphic photos from the scene. No records have been produced.

L.A. County's chief law enforcement watchdog, the Office of Inspector General, [also sought documents](#) — through a subpoena — related to allegations that Villanueva directed the coverup. The Sheriff's Department did not comply.

It's not the first time The Times has accused the Sheriff's Department of Public Records Act violations.

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In 2016, The Times contested exorbitant fees the department tried to charge the paper for emails containing certain racist terms sent, received or forwarded by members of the agency's command staff.

Two years later, the paper accused officials of [refusing to release information](#) about the status of homicide investigations, mundane information such as email addresses for Sheriff's Department employees and records involving prosecutors and others in the district attorney's office who have been disciplined for sexual harassment or misconduct.

Just before he took office, Villanueva was [quoted in L.A. Taco as saying](#) he would settle one of the cases.

"I think the press has a right to know, and acting on behalf of the public and disseminating information to the public. That's part of transparency. We have nothing to hide. It's the public's information. It doesn't belong to the department. It belongs to the taxpayers," he was quoted as saying.

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Both lawsuits remain pending.

The Times also [intervened last year](#) in cases brought by the Los Angeles Police Protective League and the Assn. for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs, which sought unsuccessfully to keep records related to discipline and serious uses of force before 2019 confidential.

CALIFORNIA



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Alene Tchekmedyian covers the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. She previously wrote about the county's criminal courts and breaking news throughout California. Before joining The Times in 2016, she reported on crime and policing for the Glendale News-Press and Burbank Leader. She grew up in Huntington Beach and graduated from UCLA.

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Imperial County proposes stepping back its reopening plan amid coronavirus surge

Mark Olalde Palm Springs Desert Sun

Published 9:00 p.m. PT Jun. 29, 2020

Imperial County public officials on Monday proposed new restrictions to stem the spread of the coronavirus, which has been surging through the rural county at rates not seen anywhere else in the state.

Most notably, the county's plan includes limiting non-essential retail stores to curbside pickup only, shuttering public parks and prohibiting any nonessential gatherings, including churches and other places of worship if they meet indoors.

Much of the plan called for increased outreach to county residents to beseech them to wear masks and socially distance. In a statement announcing the proposal, board of supervisors Chair Luis Plancarte instructed "all governing bodies in our County to increase engagement within their communities to help us improve the health and safety of its residents."

Situated along the U.S.-Mexico border, Imperial County and its roughly 180,000 residents have the highest rate of COVID-19 tests coming back positive, at 22.5%, according to the California Department of Public Health. The county also has the highest rate of new cases, with nearly 700 reported per 100,000 residents in a recent two-week period.

California: Counties are reopening. Two-thirds have higher rate of COVID-19 cases

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Earlier Monday, Gov. Gavin Newsom said he would take action to shut down more of Imperial County if local officials decided against doing so themselves.

"If they are unsuccessful around building consensus around going back to a stay-at-home order," Newsom said Monday, "the state of California will assert itself and make sure that happens."

Many of the county's recommendations that were released Monday evening were suggestions — for example, "strongly encourage businesses to enforce face-covering requirements" — and local officials said they were waiting to hear more from the state.

Depending on the state's response to the latest proposal, the county's public health officer, Dr. Stephen Munday, plans to issue a revised public health order matter.

Over the weekend, Newsom sent three cabinet secretaries to meet with Imperial County officials to encourage them to further shut down in a strategy he called a "dimmer switch." In response to Newsom's recent focus on the county, the board of supervisors held an emergency meeting Monday afternoon and said they also met with the state again.

But the county has recently been discussing its coronavirus response in closed sessions, which remove an important layer of transparency from the decision-making process. Immediately after a prayer and the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, the board of supervisors voted unanimously to move once again into a closed session Monday afternoon during their meeting.

Plancarte said on Friday that the emergency meetings and closed sessions were needed because the threat of further shutdowns could impact the county's economy and, as a result, public services and facilities.

Newsom on Monday reiterated that the pandemic differs county by county, saying that "local health directors have a unique understanding of the criteria of concern."

But, he said, Imperial County and a number of others had shown that they couldn't control their numbers.

"The bottom line is we're doing this because we've seen an increase in the spread of the virus," he said.

On Sunday, Newsom ordered bars to close or remain closed in seven counties and requested that eight other counties issue their own orders to do the same, which Riverside County did Monday.

Newsom, along with public health experts, agreed that new cases were all but guaranteed as

of four stages of reopening, although nearly everything besides large gatherings has been given the green light if individual counties attested since mid-May that they had the virus somewhat under control.

What California politicians didn't anticipate was how uncontrollably COVID-19 cases would surge once the majority of businesses reopened.

Newsom on Monday said that Imperial County had expressed interest in moving forward at the attestation phase but "was simply unable to attest that the conditions were such that they can mitigate the spread of the virus." Only three of 58 counties are yet to have an approved Stage 2 attestation form, which allows them to move more quickly through reopening.

Still, Imperial County reopened retail and places of worship in late May when Newsom allowed all counties to do so.

On Friday, the board of supervisors met to discuss a response, although they did not announce any changes, instead pleading with residents to wear masks and maintain social distancing.

"If you failed to do your part, everything we're doing is worthless," Plancarte said.

The county's hospital system has been operating at capacity, and they have sent more than 500 coronavirus-positive patients to nearby jurisdictions including Riverside and San Bernardino counties to handle the surge.

"The spread of the virus in Imperial County was such that we as a state were working to decompress their hospital system over a five-week period," Newsom said, adding that the hospital transfers put "stress and strain on the surrounding systems."

Since more businesses were allowed to reopen, however, counties across the state have seen surges.

As of Monday, state officials had listed 19 counties on a watch list that includes targeted engagement with the state's health department. Southern California is all over the list, which includes Imperial, Los Angeles, Riverside, Orange and San Bernardino counties, among others.

Mark Olalde covers the environment for The Desert Sun. Get in touch at molalde@gannett.com, and follow him on Twitter at [@MarkOlalde](https://twitter.com/MarkOlalde).

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Los Angeles Times

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CALIFORNIA

At least 176 test positive for coronavirus at Ventura County farmworker housing complex



Farmworkers pick strawberries in a field in Oxnard. (Mel Melcon / Los Angeles Times)

By KRISTI STURGILL

JUNE 30, 2020 | 10:28 PM

An outbreak of COVID-19 has left at least 176 residents and staff members infected at a farmworker housing facility in Ventura County. Of the 216 tests administered to people affiliated with the facility, more than 80% returned positive.

The infected residents — all men, mostly in their 20s and 30s — either have mild symptoms or are asymptomatic. None have been hospitalized for COVID-19, said Rigoberto Vargas, the Ventura County public health director.

The county had recorded a total of 2,926 [confirmed cases](#) as of Tuesday evening.

The outbreak at the farmworkers' housing complex occurred at Villa Las Brisas, which provides agriculture employers with temporary housing for their workers. The complex's dorm-style rooms each generally house up to nine people, Vargas said. Residents can also congregate in a common eating area, recreation room or barbecue area.

But as concerns about the coronavirus rose, the housing facility implemented several preventive measures. Total capacity was reduced from 441 residents to 205, with four or five people in each room. Meal hours were staggered to reduce numbers in the dining hall.

The county also took steps to curtail the spread of the virus. Its agricultural commissioner allotted [1 million masks to farming sites](#). County officials sent fliers that described COVID-19 symptoms to farmworkers, and they wrote [guidelines employers could follow](#) to prevent spread. Physicians visited farms to answer questions about the virus and to educate workers about preventive techniques.

For several months, the measures worked: Farmworkers accounted for an average of only 2% of total positive cases, a county statement said.

But on June 17, two residents at Villa Las Brisas tested positive for the coronavirus. Vargas was unsure how the men had caught it.

The housing complex took action: The two individuals were quarantined. Community dining was replaced with catering. Twenty-five residents who worked for the same contractor as the two COVID-positive men were also tested.

But then there were 12 new cases.

Soon, the 14 COVID-positive residents were moved to an off-site motel. But within a week, more farmworkers from three independent contractors reported COVID-19 symptoms, said a statement from Alejandro Castilla, housing program manager at Villa Las Brisas.

"Our property manager immediately contacted Ventura County health officials," he said.

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That's when the county conducted "the full, on-site testing of the entire 200" people, which yielded the high number of positive results, Vargas said.

Apart from the 14 residents who were moved to the motel, all other infected residents remain at the Villa Las Brisas housing complex. Health workers attend to sick residents directly in their rooms. All of the residents who tested negative for COVID-19 were provided alternative off-site housing.

The housing complex has implemented contact tracing, along with a review of health protocols, Castilla said, adding, "To date, the county has not required any changes to our safety or hygiene protocols."

[CALIFORNIA](#) [COVID-19 PANDEMIC](#)



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Kristi Sturgill covers breaking news and service journalism as a reporting intern at the Los



BUSINESS • Opinion Columnist

Coronavirus rebound? California shoppers see reasons to be optimistic

But recent surges in the pandemic's spread are not reflected in two June surveys.



California Consumer Confidence Index

Look at monthly consumer opinion on current conditions, outlook and overall index



SOURCE: CONFERENCE BOARD

STAFF GRAPHIC

By **JONATHAN LANSNER** | jlansner@scng.com | Orange County Register

PUBLISHED: June 30, 2020 at 10:46 a.m. | UPDATED: June 30, 2020 at 10:46 a.m.



California shoppers recently showed a dash of financial hope to pollsters, thinking the worst of the pandemic's economic wallop could be history.

Two consumer confidence indexes showed some surprising resolve in June as the state economy was slowly reopening.

Let's start with the Conference Board's overall consumer confidence index for the state. For June, this benchmark was at 77.6 — up from a revised 74.1 for May. Confidence bottomed in April, tumbling 32% that month, and the index is still down from 111.5 in June 2019.

The index languishes as California consumers' view of current conditions were up from May but still depressed from a year earlier. This is not entirely surprising considering the state's unemployment rate is 16%.

But what's more noteworthy is that when shoppers were asked about the economic future their outlook was more optimistic both compared with May and a year earlier.

These results mirror what was found in the Orange County Consumer Sentiment Index from economists at Chapman University and Claremont McKenna College. The overall index fell 14% in the second quarter and is off 29% over 12 months.

Yet the local poll also revealed an uptick in the outlook for U.S. business conditions in the next year as well as a positive impact of those improving conditions on personal finances.

There was stuff to feel good about for much of June. Many stay-at-home orders were pulled back. Bosses began rehiring furloughed workers in May and that pace increased in June. The stock market recouped much of its earlier steep losses.

But let me dull some of the enthusiasm by noting that recent surges in the pandemic's spread are not reflected in these two surveys.

Still, this feel-good wave wasn't just California. The Conference Board found similar patterns in the seven other big states it tracks as well as in its national index.

For the month, overall consumer confidence rose in six states; it failed to improve anywhere year-ago levels. Current conditions were seen as better in five states for the month and but in none over 12 months. But like California, expectations are up, rising in six states for the month and in five states vs. June 2019.

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The U.S. consumer confidence index was 98.1 in the month vs. 85.9 a month earlier and down from 124.3 a year ago. U.S. shoppers' view of current conditions increased in the month but dipped over 12 months. Meanwhile, consumers' long-run economic hopes were up, too, both in the month and the year.

This revival of optimism got Americans in a shopping mood, at least before a coronavirus rebound raised questions as to whether the economy reopened too quickly. Look at what the Conference Board found when it asked nationwide about plans to make major purchases in the next six months.

Buying a home is on the minds of 6.5% who were polled in June. That's up from 6% a month earlier and 6.2% a year ago. This even tops the five-year average of 6.1%. An itch to own — not to mention record-low mortgage rates — has helped homebuying rebound to the 2019 homebuying pace.

And 11.7% of people surveyed have car purchase plans this month, up sharply from a 10-year low of 8.1% in April. Still, this is below the five-year average of 12.5%.

I wonder if work-from-home options may slow the auto sales rebound as commuting needs drop.

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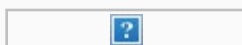
Here's when State Street in Redlands will be opened for outdoor dining

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BUSINESS • Explainer, News

Where to get financial help during coronavirus in California



Emergency relief file folder

By **JACKIE BOTTS** | CALmatters

PUBLISHED: June 30, 2020 at 5:14 p.m. | UPDATED: June 30, 2020 at 5:14 p.m.



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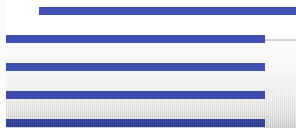
From hotel rooms for people who are homeless to restaurant meals for seniors isolating for their lives, California has rapidly expanded its safety net in an attempt to catch millions of residents impacted by the coronavirus and its economic aftershocks.

In daily press conferences during the pandemic's first months, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced new "first-in-the-nation" plans to protect vulnerable Californians from illness or financial distress at a dizzying pace.

But months in, the pandemic safety net strains and sometimes snaps under the weight of Californians' needs. People spend hours calling agency after agency seeking help to buy groceries or pay rent. Many fall through the cracks.

Approximately 16 million Californians, or 53% of all adults, have lost income since March 13, according to estimates from a Census Bureau survey conducted in mid-June. An estimated 3.5 million residents report their family lacked enough food to eat, up from 2.7 million before the pandemic. And 3.3 million have slight or no confidence that they'll be able to pay July's rent.

TOP ARTICLES 1/5



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1 of 6

Cassie Gamboa, left, and Robert Romo, right, go into their new hotel room with Edwin Aviles, of Union Station Homeless Services on Tuesday, April 7, 2020. Photo by Michael Owen Baker courtesy of Los Angeles County



Whether California's safety net response represents the best the state could do to keep its residents afloat or a one-two punch of overpromising and underdelivering may lie in the eyes of the beholder.

For some of California's biggest pandemic safety net programs, here's how the state's promises square with reality:

Unemployment assistance

The promise? Since Newsom's shelter-in-place order in mid-March, the state's unemployment rate has soared from 2.0% to 17.3%. Over 6.7 million people have sought unemployment benefits — more than the first two years of the Great Recession.

To keep up with an avalanche of jobless claims, Newsom on April 15 announced the Employment Development Department would open its phone lines from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week, up from just weekday mornings.

Independent contractors and the self-employed, newly eligible for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance through the federal CARES act, would get their benefits in 24 to 48 hours, Newsom promised.

How has California delivered?

While the agency has successfully distributed more than \$33.5 billion in unemployment benefits, some Californians still face months without any jobless benefits, confusing guidelines, impenetrable phone lines and frequent disconnections when they do get through to a live person.

California's problems aren't unique: across the country, antiquated, underfunded unemployment systems have left applicants hanging.

Many are the gig workers who Newsom promised would get expedited benefits, from a Santa Clara woman who received one letter awarding her unemployment and another denial letter on the same day to a Los Angeles interior designer who called the state as many as 62 times a day.

Department spokeswoman Loree Levy clarified that Newsom's promise that pandemic-related benefits would arrive within two days "forgot some very important caveats."

An increasingly loud chorus of California legislators has condemned the department. David Chiu, a Democrat assemblyman from San Francisco, branded the hashtag #EDDFailoftheDay with the story of a constituent who has waited for three months for their claim to be resolved. Other lawmakers piled on. Assemblyman Jim Patterson, a Fresno Republican, has requested an audit of the department.

Apply with the California Employment Development Department [here](#).

Help for kids missing out on school lunch

The promise? Before the pandemic shuttered schools, 3.8 million K-12 students were eligible for free or reduced school lunches across the state.

In March, the U.S. Congress authorized Pandemic-EBT, a program to replace school meals with grocery money. A month later, Newsom announced eligible children would get a one-time payment of up to \$365 each. Those who already receive assistance from the state would receive the money automatically. The rest needed to apply online.

How has California delivered?

California partnered with Code for America, a nonprofit that works to modernize government services, to create a remarkably user-friendly application, receiving 1.3 million student applications to date.

While California has already issued P-EBT cards to 3.1 million children, getting to the last 20% of eligible children has been a challenge.

It's essentially a data management problem, said Tracey Patterson, a senior project manager at Code for America. Parents continue to apply for free and reduced lunch at their school. School districts continually send new lists of eligible children to the state's education agency. P-EBT applications only get approved if the child's name shows up on that list.

"There is this giant circle of comparing lists that are constantly being updated on a daily and weekly basis," Patterson said. In contrast, other states like Michigan and Rhode Island already had "very strong data management and infrastructure pre-crisis" that made distributing the money easy.

The state's webpage for the program says there is a "delay in processing applications for P-EBT due to the high volume of people who need help during the pandemic" and asks parents to stop calling for answers. "You will hear back from us with your final eligibility status by July 30th," it states.

Apply with California's Department of Social Services [here](#). The deadline has been extended from June 30 to July 15.

Restaurant meals for seniors

The promise? On April 24, Newsom announced Great Plates Delivered, a first-in-the-nation program

to send three nutritious restaurant meals per day to isolated seniors sheltering in place from the coronavirus. It was a win-win, Newsom said, that would help keep seniors “in the millions” healthy and restore restaurants jobs.

“Even if it’s hundreds of thousands that take advantage of this, just in weeks you’ll see millions and millions of meals part of this program,” Newsom said.

How has California delivered?

The program got off to a rocky start. Though Newsom said the program went into effect immediately, local officials were caught unawares, even as tens of thousands of seniors called 211 to sign up. Eyeing the program’s looming May 10 expiration date, many municipalities opted out.

Since then, the federal government has extended funding for the program through July 10 and 37 cities and counties have rolled out the program, delivering over 2 million meals to approximately 32,000 seniors.

While the program has been lauded for stimulating much-needed food industry jobs — for example, in Sacramento more than half of the initial 30 restaurants were minority-owned — others have criticized it for leaving behind seniors most in need. Seniors with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level are excluded, as are those who receive other federal nutrition programs like food stamps or Meals on Wheels, which provide far less assistance.

Check whether meals are offered in your area, and how to apply, at California’s COVID response website.

Assistance for undocumented immigrants

The promise? Despite facing staggering job losses, California’s two million undocumented immigrants are ineligible for most federal and state relief. On April 15, Newsom announced a \$75 million disaster relief fund to provide a one-time payment of \$500 to 150,000 immigrants ineligible for other pandemic relief on a first-come, first-serve basis. Philanthropists had also committed to raising another \$50 million, Newsom said.

Has California delivered?

On May 18, the nonprofits selected by the state to distribute the aid began taking applications by phone. Immediately, they were swamped with millions of calls — a signal of the depth of need.

To date, 82,000 recipients have received over \$32.2 million in pre-paid cards. But there's a bottleneck at the nonprofits which are "working around the clock literally" to interview and verify the eligibility of each applicant, said Angelica Salas, executive director of the Coalition of Human Rights in Los Angeles, which fields applications there. Each day her organization can only interview about 1,200 and 1,500 of the 600,000 to 800,000 people who try to get through the phone line, she said.

Meanwhile, philanthropists have raised \$39.7 million towards the \$50 million goal, which is distributed by a network of local community organizations on a rolling basis.

To apply for the state relief, California's Department of Social Services directs people to contact the nonprofit serving your area before June 30. Find an organization distributing philanthropic relief [here](#) or make a donation [here](#).

Hotel rooms for the unhoused

The promise? On April 3, Newsom announced Project Roomkey, a program funded largely by the federal government to lease 15,000 hotel rooms in which unhoused people could shelter-in-place from the virus.

That would cover about a tenth of California's homeless population, which numbers over 150,000, with about 108,000 living on streets or in cars.

"This is the crisis that predated the most current crisis in the state of California," Newsom said. "We're doing everything in our power to meet it head-on."

How has California delivered? As of June 22, the state had secured 15,781 rooms and placed 10,050 people with underlying conditions in hotel rooms where they can stay until the threat of the virus subsides. Another 595 were temporarily quarantined because they tested positive or have been exposed. The rest of the rooms stand vacant, ready for a surge.

However, Los Angeles County, the epicenter of both California's homeless crisis and COVID-19 spread has fallen short of its own goal to place 15,000 unhoused, vulnerable Angelenos in rooms, having only leased close to 4,000 rooms thus far. Instead, officials now propose to place the 15,000 in permanent housing in three years.

While 10,000 is a lot of people to place in rooms, it's half the number of healthcare workers who have stayed in hotels on California's tab during the pandemic — a reflection of how challenging, and contentious, it is to chip away at California's homelessness crisis.

Newsom has shifted his aim from short-term public health intervention to a long-term homelessness solution. The new budget deal sets aside \$550 million in federal emergency aid to buy hotels to be turned into permanent supportive housing. The catch: the aid expires on December 31, but acquiring hotels can be consuming and pricey.

To be screened for a hotel room, call the homelessness agency for your area.

How Newsom grades himself

Asked to grade the success of the COVID-19 safety net he has cobbled together, Newsom said he's "very proud of starting things from scratch."

"We could have just walked away and never even endeavored to do something audacious, do something that no one else had ever done, do something that no else is doing," Newsom said.

But for some, Newsom's grandiose promises have caused disappointment. Sheila Kern, 66, of Monterey County waited for six weeks to receive restaurant meals that Newsom pledged to send to isolated seniors, only to cancel after receiving burnt pancakes from a poorly reviewed catering company. Meanwhile, she knew of seniors in Laguna Beach who received meals that "exceeded their expectations."

For Kern, "it failed 100%" due to a lack of oversight.

Part of the problem: with the economy bustling at record-low unemployment in February, the state wasn't ready for a disaster of this magnitude or speed.

"When the economy is good, it's rare that states put investments into the resiliency of their social safety nets because it feels like it functions," said Patterson of Code for America. "But then a crisis hits."

Some good news: in the current budget deal, Newsom and legislators managed to avoid the kinds of devastating cuts to social services that marked the last recession, possibly hobbling the state's resilience to this one.

This article is part of The California Divide, a collaboration among newsrooms examining income inequity and economic survival in California.

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THINGS TO DO AMUSEMENT PARKS DISNEYLAND • News

How Disneyland will enforce mandatory mask rule when park reopens

Mandatory mask policies have become a lightning rod in American culture amid the COVID-19 pandemic and the debate over face coverings extends to the Disneyland faithful as well.





Hong Kong Disneyland visitors in protective face masks pose for a selfie during the reopening of the park. (Disney)

By **BRADY MACDONALD** | bmacdonald@scng.com |

PUBLISHED: July 1, 2020 at 6:33 a.m. | UPDATED: July 1, 2020 at 6:34 a.m.

Disneyland plans to deploy a team whose primary job will be to enforce a new policy requiring visitors to wear protective face masks along with other COVID-19 health and safety protocols when the Anaheim theme park resort reopens following an extended coronavirus closure.

Mandatory mask policies have become a lightning rod in American culture amid the COVID-19 pandemic and the debate over face coverings extends to the Disneyland faithful as well.

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SEE ALSO: Will Disneyland sell out in minutes when the park reopens?

Some Disneyland fans are in favor of wearing masks if it will help protect themselves, other visitors and cast members, Disney parlance for employees.

“If wearing a mask, using hand sanitizer often and getting my temperature checked means that I can be in Disneyland then I am definitely doing that,” Lesli Eisler of Alberta, Canada, posted to Twitter.

Other fans have vowed not to return to a Disney theme park while the mandatory mask policy remains in place.

“Masks and temperature scans are flat out deal breakers for my family and I,” said Francis, a commenter on a Disney Parks Blog story about Disney’s health and safety protocols. “I’ll return when this unwarranted hysteria is over. Not before!”

SEE ALSO: Disneyland helicopter captures aerial footage of eerie ‘ghost town’ during coronavirus closure

Disney’s Anaheim theme parks and hotels remain closed until further notice amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The Downtown Disney outdoor shopping mall is set to reopen on July 9.

Disneyland’s mask policy will be backed up by state mandate. California Gov. Gavin Newsom has issued a mandatory order requiring people to wear masks in public places when they can’t maintain proper social distancing.

SEE ALSO: Disneyland resumes \$200,000 renovation of Frontierland gate

Disneyland employees are concerned about their own health and safety if visitors grow weary of wearing a mask all day or refuse to comply with the park’s mandatory policy on face coverings, according to union officials.

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 324 submitted a letter to Disney demanding the company establish protocols for reinforcing the mask policy with visitors and develop procedures for handling confrontations with irate visitors who refuse to wear masks.

“We have been crystal clear that we will enforce our policy requiring the wearing of face coverings by cast and guests and our resort leaders and security personnel will support cast members on this front,” Disney labor relations director Bill Pace said in a letter to the unions.

SEE ALSO: What to expect when Disneyland rethemes Splash Mountain



Disney cast members at Walt Disney World in Florida will answer visitor questions about new health and safety protocols at the Disney Springs outdoor shopping mall. (Disney)

Disneyland plans to deploy a new Guest Experience Team throughout the resort that will explain the new health and safety protocols, answer questions and encourage visitors to follow the rules.

The “primary job” of the Guest Experience Team will be to “engage with and remind guests to comply

with all our health and safety protocols,” Pace said in the letter.

To help spread the message, Disney launched a new campaign starring The Incredibles that encourages visitors to follow the COVID-19 health and safety guidelines. In one poster, super hero fashion designer Edna Mode implores visitors to wear a mask: “Cover up dahling. It’s not just stylish — it’s smart.”

SEE ALSO: Disneyland will be last Disney theme park to reopen worldwide

ShopDisney has also unveiled a line of protective masks with Disney, Pixar, Marvel and Star Wars characters that will let Disneyland visitors add a little superhero, princess or intergalactic flair to their Disneybounding attire. It remains to be seen if the 24 new cloth face coverings featuring Mickey Mouse, Hulk, Baby Yoda and other characters will be made available at the Disneyland resort once the parks reopen.

Disneyland plans to take a multi-pronged approach to reopening following a monthslong coronavirus closure with a new set of COVID-19 health and safety protocols designed to make it safer to visit Disney’s Anaheim theme parks.

The new Disneyland COVID-19 health and safety protocols for visitors include:

- Reduced capacity in the parks
- Required face coverings for visitors 2 years old and older
- Temperature checks for visitors prior to entering the parks
- Physical distancing throughout the parks
- Increased cleaning and disinfecting, especially in high-traffic areas
- Additional handwashing and hand sanitizer locations
- Contactless payments at shops and restaurants

Health and safety guidelines for Disney employees will include:

- Required face coverings and temperature checks
- Adjusting work practices to promote physical distancing
- Increased cleaning in work areas
- Encouraged to stay home when ill

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continued dialogue with our unions on the extensive health and safety protocols, following guidance from public health experts, which we plan to implement as we move toward our proposed, phased reopening,” a Disneyland official said in a statement.

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Brady MacDonald | Reporter

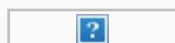
Brady MacDonald is a theme park reporter for the Orange County Register and the Southern California News Group. He's covered the theme park industry for more than 25 years. He writes about Disney, Universal, Six Flags, SeaWorld, Cedar Fair and Legoland parks in Southern California, across the United States and around the world. As a member of the SCNG Features team, he also writes about entertainment, travel, pop culture, music, restaurants and craft beer.

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CBS NEWS / July 1, 2020, 8:34 AM

Young adults unconcerned by coronavirus "may be killing other people," doctor warns

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Young people are out enjoying the warmer weather across the country, but according to health officials, they also might be spreading and contracting the **coronavirus**. As people pack into parks, beaches, restaurants, bars and even concerts, cases are rising in at least 37 states, with surges among young people linked to everything from fitness classes to summer fraternity parties.

"I'm not too scared of getting sick," said Chris Clarici in San Francisco.

"I just personally don't care," said a young person in Boston. "I haven't got sick yet."

Experts have warned that attitude is dangerous.

"They may be indirectly hurting people by infecting someone who then infects someone, who then infects someone who's vulnerable," Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, said last week.

In Arizona, nearly half of coronavirus cases are people 20 to 44 years old. Last week, President Donald Trump spoke at a rally in the state where the crowd of around 3,000 people was mostly young and maskless.

In Hays County, Texas, about 30 miles outside of Austin, young adults make up more than half of all cases. In Florida, a coronavirus hotspot, the highest number of cases are among people between the ages of 25 and 34 years old.

"If I get it, then, you live with your consequences," said Bojan Atanasovski, a 25-year-old West Palm Beach resident.

Atanasovski, who works as a salesman, said he wears a mask in places where it's required but he doesn't want coronavirus to stop him from living life.

"I need something to unwind," he told "CBS This Morning" lead national correspondent David Begnaud. "Some people like reading. Some people like working out. ... I like, you know, going and seeing other people as well. Now, if I had to go out and do that with a face mask, right, if they required it to wear a face mask, sure, I'll do that. But if they don't require it, I would choose not to."

Dr. Charles Lockwood, the senior vice president of University of South Florida Health, said he has observed a change in coronavirus cases over the last few weeks.

"The age of cases is what is most remarkable. That has been dropping steadily," he said.

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Lockwood has administered more than 300 coronavirus tests and is alarmed by the spike among young people.

"It really is consistent with what we've been observing, which is incredible noncompliance with wearing face masks, social distancing, particularly among young adults and teenagers," he said.

Lockwood recognized that young people have "a different way of looking at life."

"The problem is that while you may not die and you may not even know you're sick, you may be killing other people," he said.

Sophia Carrion, who lives with her parents in Los Angeles, said she's strict about social distancing and wearing a mask.

"If my parents were to get sick, ... I would not be able to live with myself," she said.

The 23-year-old has a message to young people not taking the virus seriously.

"It's not just about you. I think that's a big mindset people have, like, 'Oh, if I get it, I'll be fine, it's just the flu.' Maybe, but you don't want to pass it to someone who could be more vulnerable or more susceptible," she said.

Carrion said she thinks young people have a bad reputation and pointed out that there are also older people who don't wear masks or social distance.

While young people are less likely to be hospitalized or die of COVID-19, last week, two 17-year-olds died from the virus in Florida.

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CORONAVIRUS


More than 7,000 kids have tested positive for coronavirus in Florida. 12 have MIS-C

BY MICHELLE MARCHANTE AND CARLI TEPROFF

JULY 01, 2020 10:24 AM , UPDATED 2 HOURS 12 MINUTES AGO



Florida has at least 7 kids with multi-system inflammatory syndrome, or MIS-C, linked to coronavirus (COVID-19). Nicklaus Children’s Hospital near South Miami has created a specialized ICU unit to treat the disorder. BY NICKLAUS CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL | [PIERRE TAYLOR](#) ✉

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Two teenagers have died from COVID-19-related complications in Florida last month and more than 7,000 other children under 18 have tested positive for the disease since the pandemic began in March, according to Florida's Department of Health.

The numbers are a stark reminder that kids and young adults are not immune to the disease.

Of the kids who tested positive, 2,865 were in South Florida.

TOP ARTICLES



South Florida has lost hundreds to COVID-19. They all had stories. Help us tell them

“Just because they look well, doesn’t necessarily mean they don’t have the disease,” said Dr. Marcos Mestre, the senior medical director of pediatric services at Nicklaus Children Hospital near South Miami.

Children are not at [higher risk for COVID-19](#) than adults, but they can still fall ill with the disease and require hospitalization if the condition worsens, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

One of the main concerns of doctors is that kids and teens might be less strict about following social distancing guidelines when they go out and when they gather with friends during the summer.

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Kids and teens infected with the disease will likely be asymptomatic or only have mild symptoms, Mestre said, but it doesn’t mean they can’t spread the disease to

WHICH FLORIDA COUNTY HAS THE MOST CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES IN KIDS?



Children 2 and older should wear face masks to limit the risk of COVID-19 transmission, the CDC says. File photo *DREAMSTIME/TNS*

The three counties with the highest number of confirmed cases in children are in South Florida, according to the state's pediatric report.

Miami-Dade County has 1,242 known cases, Palm Beach County has 866 and Broward County has 747.

While Florida's overall statewide and county level COVID-19 data for the past several weeks has been concerning, it's difficult to interpret the state's pediatric report to determine how much the disease has spread among children for a variety of reasons, including testing limitations, said Mary Jo Trepka, an epidemiologist with Florida International University.

When COVID-19 testing first became available in March, testing was restricted to those who were experiencing symptoms and met a specific criteria, including having recently traveled to a high-risk COVID-19 area. Now, almost anyone can be tested for the disease regardless of symptoms though some sites in South Florida still do not accept children younger than 12.

One of the key indicators experts rely on to determine whether the pandemic is worsening is the percentage of positive cases. Florida's pediatric positive test rate is 17%. The rate increases or decreases depending on the county. And South Florida does not have the highest pediatric percent positive test rate despite having more confirmed cases.

Miami-Dade has a 21.3% pediatric positive rate, Broward is at 17.6% and Palm Beach County is at 24.9%. Each county has tested more than 3,000 kids. Monroe County, which has 10 confirmed cases out of 119 kids who were tested, is at 8.4%.

DeSoto County, which has reported 100 confirmed pediatric cases out of 218 tests, has the highest children percent positive test rate in the state at 45.9%, according to the state's report. Martin County, which has reported 196 confirmed pediatric cases out of 435 tests, was second at 45.1%.

Other counties have lower pediatric positive test rates. Calhoun, Franklin and Liberty, which have tested about 10 children each, have not had any confirmed cases of the disease in kids.

Florida's pediatric testing data tells Trepka that not enough children have been tested for the disease. It also tells her that most of the pediatric COVID-19 cases statewide are school-age children, which could spell trouble for school reopening plans, she said.

And with camps and children's programs opening for the summer, Trepka says parents should make sure that the programs are following CDC guidelines to reduce the risk of transmission.

The overall high level of kids testing positive for the disease also indicates that there might be a lot of pediatric cases that have not been confirmed yet, whether because of testing limitations or because the kids are asymptomatic, she said.

If the rise of younger COVID-19 patients continue, Trepka and Mestre say this might indicate that more testing of Florida's younger population will be needed. Mestre says parents also need to help children and teenagers "realize we are not out of this yet and we have to follow the recommendations of the CDC."

HOW MANY CASES OF MIS-C DOES FLORIDA HAVE?



Nicklaus Children's Hospital near South Miami has created a specialized four-room "unit-within-a-unit" to treat and isolate children diagnosed with multi-system inflammatory syndrome, or MIS-C. *COURTESY OF NICKLAUS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL*

While kids and young adults are not at high-risk for severe symptoms of COVID-19, they still need to follow social distancing guidelines, wear masks if they are older than 2 and frequently wash their hands, Trepka and Mestre say.

That's because even if children are asymptomatic or have very mild symptoms, they can still transmit the disease to others.

Anyone younger than 21 is also at risk of falling ill with [multi-system inflammatory syndrome](#), a rare but serious and sometimes deadly complication associated with COVID-19, according to the CDC.

"Even though it's rare, it's severe," Trepka said. "I think we shouldn't assume that it's OK for children to be exposed to COVID-19."

Multi-system inflammatory syndrome, or MIS-C, is described as a swelling that can affect "multiple body systems" including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes and gastrointestinal organs, the CDC says.

Many of the children diagnosed with the syndrome tested positive for COVID-19, were previously infected with the novel coronavirus (based on antibody tests) or had contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, according to the CDC.

Nicklaus Children Hospital, which in May created a specialized four-room "MIS-C pod" as part of the hospital's 40-bed Pediatric Intensive Care Unit to better treat the condition, said [symptoms of the syndrome](#) vary and can appear up to a month after [a child is infected with COVID-19](#), including in those who were asymptomatic.

There is no official treatment, with doctors using different immune-modulating therapies to treat it, depending on the child's symptoms. [Most kids recover.](#)

Florida's Department of Health confirmed to the Miami Herald in late May that there were at least seven children in the state [diagnosed with MIS-C](#) and that six of them were in South Florida.

Since then, the state has raised its official MIS-C tally to 12. As of Friday, the youngest case is a 1-year-old boy in Miami-Dade County. The oldest is a 17-year-old girl in Collier County.

Seven of the 12 children were diagnosed in South Florida. Five were in Miami-Dade, four boys ranging from 1 to 14 and a 9-year-old girl. There also was a 6-year-old girl in Broward County and a 2-year-old boy in Palm Beach County.

It's still unknown if the syndrome can also affect adults or if there are certain children who are at higher risk.

Many doctors and public health experts still don't know enough about COVID-19 and MIS-C, but one thing is clear, Maestre said: "This is going to last for a longer period of time and we just want people to not let their guard down."

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DeSantis says yes

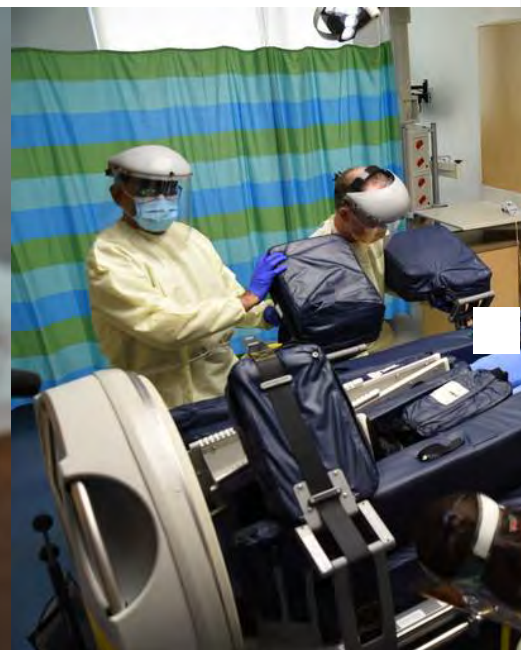
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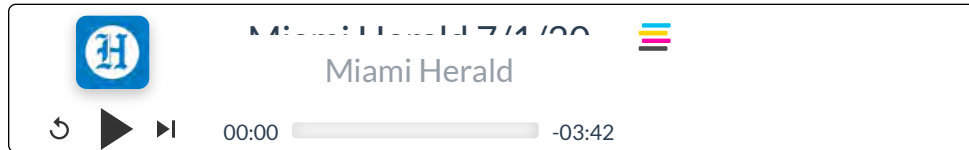


Two teenagers have died from COVID-19-related complications in Florida last month and more than 7,000 other children under 18 have tested positive for the

their family members or others in the community who might be at higher risk for more serious complications.

Doctors also worry that kids and teenagers may also be at risk of falling ill with multi-system inflammatory syndrome, a rare inflammatory disorder believed to be linked to COVID-19.

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Florida has tested 42,287 children less than 1 to 17 for the novel coronavirus, according to the state's weekly [COVID-19 pediatric report](#), which is updated every Friday. Of those tested, 7,197, or 17%, tested positive, the report states.

According to the report, 155 children were also hospitalized at some point during their illness. The report does not specify in which county the children were hospitalized.

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Two of those children who were previously hospitalized — a [17-year-old boy in Pasco County](#) and a 16-year-old girl in Lee County — later died from COVID-related complications, according to health records.

Mestre told the Miami Herald last week that Nicklaus Children's Hospital has treated 150 children with COVID-19, and only about 50 of those had to be hospitalized. Most were sent home and treated as outpatients, Mestre said.

Based on what doctors know so far, it appears that kids who are obese or have health conditions including asthma are at a higher risk for severe illness with the disease, he said. And in recent weeks, with more things opening up, cases have gone up, especially in older children.

"We have seen a little bit of uptick in the patients that are coming in with COVID," he said. "Thankfully...in general the patients have been doing very well and thankfully not having serious complications."

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SCIENCE

Now you can see the relationship between reopening policies and COVID-19 cases



Lester Crowell changes the message on a marquee outside his Marietta, Ga., salon and boutique to alert passersby of its reopening. (Jenny Jarvie / Los Angeles Times)

By [DEBORAH NETBURN](#) | STAFF WRITER

JULY 1, 2020 | 6 AM

Florida. South Carolina. Arizona. Nevada.

In these and other states across America, the number of [new COVID-19 cases](#) is growing at an alarming rate, and there is no indication that the coronavirus that causes it will slow down anytime soon.

Arizona Gov. [Doug Ducey](#) warned this week that hospitals in his state could hit surge capacity very shortly and urged residents to stay home when possible, wear masks, and stop gathering in large groups.

He stopped short, however, of reimposing any formal restrictions on Arizonans' activities,

appealing instead to their sense of altruism and community.

In Florida, Gov. Ron DeSantis is continuing to move toward the final tier of his three-step plan to reopen the Sunshine State, even as it contends with the [sharpest increase in new cases](#) anywhere in the country,

DeSantis said it was a blessing that in the past few weeks the majority of people testing positive for the virus had shifted from those over 50 to those ages 18 to 44, a group less likely to be hospitalized for COVID-19 or to die of the disease, the [Tampa Bay Times reported](#).

SCIENCE

Is it safe to shop and eat out yet? We assess the risk

June 17, 2020

But health officials caution that — unless there are interventions in place like widespread [mask-wearing](#), [social distancing](#), and [robust testing](#) followed by [contact tracing](#) — the virus will almost certainly reach older populations as well.

“You won’t see the same peak in deaths right now that you saw earlier in the pandemic, but it will eventually spread to people who will die,” said [Jennifer Nuzzo](#), an epidemiologist at the Center for Health Security at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health.

Nuzzo and her colleagues have created a new [data visualization](#) tool that combines the number of new COVID-19 cases and deaths reported every day in each state with the dates that reopening policies have been implemented there.



• Governor Newsom is requesting emergency action from the legislature to make available up to \$20 million for the COVID-19 response.

A timeline of newly confirmed coronavirus cases in California, juxtaposed against reopening milestones in the state. (Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center)

The goal is to help researchers, policy makers and the public understand the impact of reopening measures on the number of new cases in each state.

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Their hope is that officials might use the data to make decisions about lifting or reinstating infection control policies as the pandemic evolves.

Nuzzo spoke with the L.A. Times about what the new tool can tell us, why all reopenings are not equal, and why we should always remember that, when it comes to this coronavirus, no outcome is ever inevitable.

What patterns emerge when you look at the data this way?

Well, first of all, we can't infer causality from this data, but we can make observations.

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I've been mostly looking at Texas and Arizona. What we are seeing is a first opening, a pause, and then a whole bunch of openings right after each other. It seems after that is when we see a rise in cases.

But there are states that have followed a similar pattern of reopening and not seen the same spike in cases. What explains that?

My sense is that it's not just reopening and allowing people to mix more that matters — it's *how* you reopen. If you say, "We are open, but we really don't want you to go out," that's very different from, "We're open. Go out and support the economy."

How those reopenings were messaged and whether people were told to wear masks and maintain physical distance make a difference.

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Anything else?

Given that the closures and shutdowns did not make the virus go away, it was clear that if you opened back up, you would see a rise in cases.

If a state did not want those case numbers to accelerate, they need to have other measures in place like no gaps in testing, the ability to make sure that everybody who tests positive is isolated at home, and contact tracing.

It seems like the states we are most worried about now opened up with nothing to replace the shutdown.

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The tool you created lets you toggle between cases and deaths. In hot spot states like Arizona and Florida, cases are spiking but not deaths. Why is that?

It's too early for states to see their death tolls rise. Deaths have a three- to four-week lag behind the growth in new cases.

Also, the new cases are in a younger population, so we won't see the same peak in deaths — yet. But younger people will spread it to older folks eventually.

It is important for people [who are more at risk](#) — including people 65 and over — to protect themselves.

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Some people have expressed concern that we have opened too fast. Do you think that's true?

This is a long-term game, and I think we have to have a sustainable approach here. I'm not sure telling everybody to never leave their houses is sustainable. We don't have to strive for complete perfection, but if we all did a bit more to reduce our ability to get infected and spread the disease, it would help.

SCIENCE

So you really want to see your friends? Here's how to assess the risk

May 16, 2020

For example, parents can make sure they have outdoor playdates, rather than taking their kids to Chuck E. Cheese, which is like a wet market for children.

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Is there anything else you'd like people to know?

Nothing is inevitable. A lot of my colleagues are deeply depressed about the numbers, but look at New York's data — they came back from the brink and now they are doing well and continue to do well.

Individuals have more power than they think. You might feel powerless, but you are not. You can make decisions, and you do not have to be perfect to have an effect.

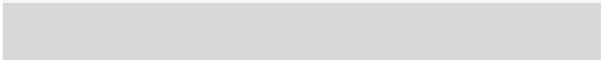
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NYC delays resumption of indoor dining at

restaurants

9 minutes ago



NEW YORK (AP) — Indoor dining at New York City restaurants will be delayed out of fear it would cause a spike in coronavirus infections, Mayor Bill de Blasio and Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Wednesday.

De Blasio, a Democrat, said he was concerned that if the city welcomed diners back into the enclosed spaces of its restaurants, it might experience the same surge in illness now being seen in other states.

“Honestly, even a week ago, honestly, I was hopeful we could. But the news we have gotten from around the country gets worse and worse all the time.”

Cuomo said the ban on indoor dining would be confined to New York City, where he complained that compliance with social-distancing guidelines is dropping. “Everything else is going to continue, everything else is continuing all across the state,” the governor, also a Democrat, said. “This is a New York City-only modification because frankly it is a problem that is most pronounced in New York City.”

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De Blasio said that outdoor dining at restaurants, which started about two weeks ago, can continue. He said 6,600 restaurants in the city have applied for permits to serve patrons outdoors and he expects more to follow suit.

“Outdoor dining unquestionably has been a great hit,” de Blasio said. “And I think the bottom line is that outdoors is working, period. This is one of the things we’ve learned. Outdoors is where we need to be to the maximum extent possible this summer as we fight back this disease.”

New York City is in the second phase of its reopening plan and is expected to get approval from Cuomo to go to a third phase on July 6.

Under the current rules, large gatherings of people are still banned, but retail stores have been allowed to welcome customers back inside and offices have reopened to workers with some social distancing rules in place.

Rates of infection and hospitalizations for COVID-19 have been declining in New York for several weeks, even as other states have seen increases in new cases. Both de Blasio and Cuomo have faulted states in the South and West for relaxing coronavirus restrictions too quickly.

“We know a lot of other parts of the country very sadly made decisions based on something other than the data,” de Blasio said.

Cuomo said there were 11 deaths attributed to the virus statewide Tuesday, down from nearly 800 deaths a day statewide during the height of New York’s outbreak in April.