



NEWS

July 21, 2020

For Immediate Release

Update on County Response to COVID-19

Redwood City – The County of San Mateo continues to work to protect public health and safety in response to the novel coronavirus known as COVID-19.

The County of San Mateo's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) remains open to coordinate countywide response and communications in response to the situation. The EOC's Joint Information Center will provide status reports every Tuesday and Thursday until further notice. Today's report:

Supervisors Provide \$2 Million to Launch Child Care Relief Fund

The Board of Supervisors voted 5-0 today to provide \$2 million to support local child care providers who have taken a financial hit due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new Child Care Relief Fund serves twin goals: help providers remain open – particularly those in areas of the county serving families with low incomes – and to ensure working families have access to quality child care.

Under the formula approved today, licensed child care centers would be eligible for grants of up to \$25,000 and [family child care homes](#) would be eligible for grants of up to \$10,000.

Centers across San Mateo County will be eligible for relief through a weighted point system. Priority funding will be targeted to providers who serve vulnerable families (those receiving [CalWORKS](#) subsidies, for instance), participate in County initiatives such as The [Big Lift](#) and meet other requirements.

Without child care, “many parents and caregivers in San Mateo County will leave the workforce,” according to a staff report that estimates more than 100,000 residents depend on child care to work.

The County faced a deficit of more than 20,000 child care spaces before the pandemic, a shortfall that could double due to the local hit to the economy.

The Board allocated the \$2 million from federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act ([CARES](#)) Funds allocated to San Mateo County.

The Child Care Relief Fund is modeled after the [San Mateo County Strong Fund](#), which provides grants to small, local businesses, individuals and families and nonprofit organizations hit by COVID-19.

The full staff report is available [here](#).

Responding to COVID-19 Economic Downturn, County Looks at Cutbacks

As COVID-19 hammers the local economy, the County of San Mateo is looking at a wide range of cutbacks affecting nearly every County department.

County staff today presented the Board of Supervisors with recommendations to address a growing budget gap. Cuts will be necessary due to falling revenues from sales taxes and other sources at the same time the County invests tens of millions in health care and to support vulnerable communities.

County staff is recommending a hiring freeze along with no promotions, deferring capital projects, reducing department budgets and dipping into reserves to balance the Fiscal Year 2020-21 budget.

Under a plan presented to the Board, the budgets for criminal justice departments would be cut by 7 percent, followed by cuts in social services (5.2 percent) and in other services. View the entire staff report [here](#). A short presentation on budget reduction recommendations can be found [here](#).

The Board scheduled the next budget study session for their August 4 meeting.

Temporary Eviction Moratorium Extended through August

The Board of Supervisors today extended an emergency moratorium on eviction for non-payment of rent by residential tenants impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic until Aug. 31, 2020.

The move places a temporary countywide moratorium on evictions from residential units for:

- (1) non-payment of rent by tenants directly impacted by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic; and
- (2) certain no-fault causes unless the eviction is necessary for the health and safety of the tenant, other residents in the tenant's building, the landlord, or the landlord's family.

Read the full staff report [here](#). The San Mateo County Department of Housing provides details and answers to frequently asked questions [here](#).

County Health Chief Comments on County's Likely Inclusion on State Watch List

In her remarks to the County of San Mateo Board of Supervisors today, Louise Rogers, chief of County Health, addressed two factors that may place the county on the state's watch list – the COVID-19 case rate and the variability of the local hospital census.

She said that San Mateo County's case rate is 105.7 per 100,000 of population, for a 14-day rolling average. Though the county's case rate is lower than that of the Bay Area (109.2), it sits just above the state's guideline that the rate should be below 100.

Yesterday, the percentage of COVID-positive patients in local hospitals was 10.8; Friday it was 12.1. Given the relatively small patient census numbers (as of yesterday, there were 74 patients, including transfers from San Quentin State Prison), a handful of incoming or discharged patients affects the percentage, increasing the variability.

In discussions with state officials, Rogers has asked that they evaluate the data with sensitivity to underlying core issues and local concerns.

San Mateo County is the only Bay Area county not on the watch list, and Rogers says she expects the county to be added soon. If San Mateo County remains on the watch list for three consecutive days, the state would require the closing of:

- Gyms and fitness centers
- Places of worship and cultural ceremonies, like weddings and funerals
- Offices for non-critical infrastructure sectors
- Personal care services, like nail salons and body waxing
- Hair salons and barbershops
- Shopping malls

She urged residents “to slow down and double down on preventative measures,” such as wearing face coverings, washing hands frequently, and avoiding gatherings.

More information about the watch list is available at the state's Roadmap to Resilience website:

<https://covid19.ca.gov/roadmap-counties/>

Health Officer Issues New Statement

San Mateo County Health Officer Dr. Scott Morrow on Monday issued a new statement where he describes the coronavirus as “surprisingly” transmissible and cautions against “complacency.” Read the statement [here](#).

San Mateo County COVID-19 Cases

San Mateo County Health has updated the number of positive cases to 4,674 as of July 20, 2020.

County Health provides detailed information on cases by age group and date and deaths by age group. Learn more at <https://www.smchealth.org/coronavirus>

Call Center

Residents with non-medical, non-emergency questions about the coronavirus can call 211 or 800-273-6222 at any time, day or night. Callers from landlines and cellular telephones located within San Mateo County are connected with a trained service professional from 211, a confidential service available in 180 languages.

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