



NEWS

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For Immediate Release

County Encourages Masking, Testing and Boosters to Battle Surge in Omicron Variant

Test kits to be distributed for children in low-income families, vulnerable residents and workers

Redwood City – The County of San Mateo expects to maintain current health and safety protocols to keep schools and the economy open and avoid coronavirus-related shutdowns.

“We believe we have a sound strategy in place to help combat this winter surge from the Omicron variant,” said County Manager Mike Callagy. “That strategy relies on all of us doing the right thing: wearing our face masks indoors, getting tested if we have symptoms, getting our vaccines and our boosters, making smart choices about the risks we take.”

At today’s meeting of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, the County superintendent of schools, Nancy Magee, said, “We are 100 percent committed to keeping our schools open.”

Magee said schools are taking a layered approach to combat the virus: requiring masks, increasing testing and continuing to encourage vaccinations through school-based events.

“We’re entering nearly two years of operating schools under COVID conditions,” Magee said. “One thing that is absolutely true is we are resilient, resourceful, creative and completely committed to the benefit of our children.”

Callagy’s comments come as County officials announced plans to distribute 50,000 at-home antigen test kits.

These kits will be provided for use by the most vulnerable residents: low-income families with children 5 years old and younger; low-income individuals with certain medical

conditions in congregant settings; and workers in child and adult care and other vital public services. County leaders thanked partners like the Office of Education, First 5 and 4Cs for helping with distribution.

“We continue to advocate for and monitor additional opportunities to obtain test kits that the federal and state governments are making available,” said Srija Srinivasan, deputy director of County Health. “Thank you for all you are doing to stay safe and protect others in your community as we get through this challenging period.”

The County’s pledge to stay the course with current health and safety protocols comes as good news to the local business community.

“The last two years have placed incredible burdens on our small businesses, those we treasure and are the bedrock of communities up and down San Mateo County,” said Rosanne Foust, president and CEO of the San Mateo County Economic Development Association, or [SAMCEDA](#).

“I encourage everyone to follow common sense health and safety measures to keep these businesses, our offices and schools open so we can take part in the daily activities we all enjoy,” she said.

In response to a surge in cases fueled by the Omicron variant, the state of California has extended an indoor mask mandate to Feb. 15, 2022. The County has also recently experienced a spike in positive cases.

“As unsettling as news of a positive test result or exposure can be and despite the challenges of the workforce disruptions, we are holding out optimism that the ‘wall of immunity’ provided by our very high vaccination rate continues to protect against severe illness, hospitalizations and deaths,” said Louise Rogers, chief of San Mateo County Health. “Also, other parts of the world have seen the very steep spike in cases followed by a steep decline.”

Resources:

San Mateo County Health

[Data dashboards, vaccination program and more](#)

Testing, Contact Tracing and Isolation & Quarantine

County Health’s testing, contact tracing, and isolation & quarantine guidance — aligned with the California Department of Public Health — is [here](#).

San Mateo County Office of Education

[School COVID-19 Safety Plans and Dashboards](#)

Vaccine Clinic Times and Locations

[MyTurn](#) displays County-operated and -supported clinics four or more days in advance, along with vaccination opportunities from other health care providers, pharmacies, and local organizations.

Face Masks – California Department of Public Health

[Guidance for the Use of Face Masks](#)