

Association of Bay Area Health Officials

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For the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency

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Bay Area Health Officers Support California Face Masking Guidance

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CA – The Association of Bay Area Health Officials, representing 12 Bay Area Health Officers and their Local Health Jurisdictions, strongly supports the California Department of Public Health’s strategy to continue with current masking guidance until June 15, when the State will align with the CDC’s updated masking guidance.

The CDC’s updated masking guidance is grounded in evidence showing that vaccines are extremely effective in protecting vaccinated people from infection, severe illness, and death, and preventing them from spreading COVID-19 to others. Additionally, increasing vaccination in our communities helps mitigate the spread of new variants that are more likely to infect those who are unvaccinated. This helps protect people who cannot yet get vaccinated, such as children younger than 12, as well as people who may not get full benefit from the vaccine, such as people with weakened immune systems.

With [almost half of California’s population over age 16 fully vaccinated, and nearly 65 percent having received at least one dose of vaccine](#), great progress has been made across the state in vaccinating eligible residents against COVID-19. However, large numbers of residents are still unvaccinated, not yet fully vaccinated, or not eligible to be vaccinated. This next month is critical to ensuring more of our residents can access vaccinations, and that businesses and other entities are able to prepare for implementation of the CDC’s updated masking guidance.

Because COVID-19 continues to circulate here and abroad, the best way for residents to protect themselves is to get vaccinated. A person is fully protected two weeks after they complete their vaccine series, which is a single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, or two doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines.

“Thanks to so many in our community who have gotten vaccinated, we have come a long way and can finally start to see a return to normalcy in our area,” said Dr. Gail Newel, Santa Cruz County Health Officer. “This next month is our chance to further increase vaccination rates. Wear your mask now, so we can get to June 15 together.”

Safe, free, and effective COVID-19 vaccines are now available to everyone age 12 and up. Book an appointment or find a walk-in clinic near you at MYTurn, <https://myturn.ca.gov> or visit www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirusvaccine.

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The Local Health Jurisdictions joining this statement are the Counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Sonoma, and the City of Berkeley.

California’s Guidelines on Face Coverings: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/guidance-for-face-coverings.aspx>