



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Jolena Voorhis
(209) 468-2997/ jvoorhis@sjgov.org

**San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors Receive COVID-19 Updates and Take Actions
*County health officials prepare for phase one vaccine disbursement before end of year***

STOCKTON – As COVID-19 cases continue to surge at alarming rates across California, the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors received updates today on the County’s accelerating number of COVID-19 cases. At the same time, County public health officials are actively preparing for the first phase of the vaccine disbursement using CDC and CDPH guidelines to, targeting vaccine administration to first line health care workers at acute care and skilled nursing facilities, and medical first responders. The Federal government is expected to approve the vaccine before the end of this year.

Dr. Maggie Park, San Joaquin County Public Health Officer, told the Board of Supervisors this morning that the County’s positivity rate has dramatically spiked in the wake of Thanksgiving, reaching almost 500 new cases on some days. Dr. Park indicated that the numbers still do not reflect all of the expected new cases resulting from the Thanksgiving holiday.

San Joaquin County COVID-19 latest statistics as of December 8, 2020:

- 28,532 total confirmed COVID-19 cases to date
- 530 total COVID-19 deaths to date
- 228 COVID-19 current patient hospitalizations
- 53 COVID-19 adult cases in ICU
- ICU total patient capacity is at 110 percent
- COVID-19 patients currently occupy 49 percent of total ICU hospital beds
- COVID-19 patients currently occupy 28 percent of total hospital beds
- COVID-19 hospitalizations have risen 39 percent in the past seven days

While San Joaquin County public health officials actively administer the State’s new COVID-19 restrictions that will remain in effect for at least three weeks, they are also preparing for countywide vaccine disbursement that will occur in four phases based on an equitable framework set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and National Institutes for Health (NIH).

“We are finally seeing some hope in ending the COVID-19 pandemic with the distribution of a vaccine in the coming weeks,” said San Joaquin County Public Health Officer, Dr. Maggie Park. “San Joaquin County positioned itself to be among the first recipients of the Pfizer vaccine because we secured the cold storage capacity needed to keep the

vaccine effective. The County expects an initial shipment of five cartons with 4,875 initial doses on December 15, 2020.”

The County procured two ultra-low temperature freezers, positioning itself as a priority recipient for the first wave of vaccines in the State. The vaccines require storage at -94 degrees F below zero and must be administered within five days once being moved to standard refrigeration storage at the hospital sites.

Dr. Park noted that the vaccines will be administered first to those who classify in phase one, which includes health care workers in high-risk positions, acute care hospital workers, paramedics and EMTs, and long-term care facility residents, among others. County health officials are working closely with local hospitals to tabulate the total number of health workers determined to be at reasonable risk. The County will then deliver a pre-determined number of vaccines to each hospital based on those tabulations.

“At just over 4,000 doses, the first shipment will fall short of being able to accommodate all individuals who classify in the phase one priority groups, but the County is on schedule to receive additional shipments in the coming weeks,” Park noted.

Dr. Park also updated the Board on the Regional Stay-At-Home Order that went into effect on December 5. The restrictions are triggered by the available ICU capacity, which if lower than 15 percent in the entire San Joaquin Valley Region, the Stay-At Home Order goes into effect. On December 3, the San Joaquin region met this threshold by reaching 14.5 percent, but dropped to 8.6 percent by December 4, putting the County well below the 15 percent threshold of ICU capacity required. Dr. Park encouraged residents to follow the Stay-at-Home orders and continue to get tested. Residents can visit www.sjready.org as the County’s main source of information for testing sites.

Following Dr. Park’s presentation, the Board received a sobering report from Bayesian about COVID-19 related deaths and received the alarming news that COVID-19 has become the leading single cause of death in San Joaquin County this year.

“According to the grim presentation we heard today, COVID-19 is now the number one cause of mortality in the County over heart failure, vehicular deaths, suicide, homicide and all types of cancer,” explained Chair of the Board of Supervisors, Kathy Miller. “Our ICU capacity is dangerously low at 6.3 percent and has the potential of dropping as low as five percent, which is putting our hospital systems in overload.”

The Board was informed that the Stay-at-Home Order will remain in effect for the San Joaquin Valley region for at least three weeks through December 28. The order will end if the region’s ICU capacity projected out four weeks later is equal to or above 15 percent. When the order is lifted, each county within the region will be assigned to a tier in the Blueprint system. It was also reported that it is unlikely that the region’s ICU capacity numbers will reach 15 percent until February.

COVID-19 Consent Items:

- Retroactive approval of the 2020 Community Services Block Grant Funded by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act Agreement with the California Department of Community Services and Development for a combined total of \$1,403,557 from March 27, 2020 - May 31, 2022 and related budget adjustments.
- Retroactive approval of agreement with Heluna Health for the period May 1, 2020 - March 31, 2022, in the amount of \$443,370, adoption of a resolution to allocate four positions in the Public Health Services budget, and approval of related budget adjustments.

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