



COVID-19 Huddle Notes for February 15, 2022

CE Messaging – What Happened in the Redistricting Process and What Comes Next for California? Webinar

Another reminder to join us this Thursday, February 17 at 11am as we discuss the results of the Redistricting process in California and what happens next. These new district lines will shape elections and the political voice of our communities for the next ten years. Panelists include our AVP of Civic Engagement, Lizette Escobedo, UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Initiative, NALEO Educational Fund, MALDEF and CHIRLA.

Our panelists will discuss how redistricting affects the communities that AltaMed serves, what Latino representation looks like under the new district maps and talk about AltaMed's Get-Out-The-Vote plans for the upcoming elections this year, and how to partner with our My Vote. My Health.™ campaign.

We hope you and your staff can register at
<https://mvmh.us/redistrictingandwhatsnextwebinar>.

Top News Lines

Federal

- The FDA delayed its planned meeting of outside advisers to consider recommending COVID-19 vaccines for children under 5 years old after new data from Pfizer and BioNTech convinced regulators to wait for more information.
<https://www.politico.com/news/2022/02/11/fda-delays-kid-vaccine-meeting-pfizer-more-data-00008261>
- The senior director for global health security and biodefense at the White House National Security Council under the Biden administration, Dr. Beth Cameron, is leaving her position this spring. Dr. Cameron played a key role in shaping the Biden administration's global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. She will be replaced by Raj Panjabi, who currently serves as the global malaria coordinator at the U.S. Agency for International Development.
<https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/593412-top-health-official-to-depart-white-house>
- President Biden's nominee to lead the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Robert Califf, is headed towards a close confirmation vote after the Senate on Monday voted to shut down debate on his nomination. The final confirmation vote on Robert Califf, which could come as early as Tuesday, is expected to be even closer than the 49-45 vote to invoke cloture. Dr. Califf is a cardiologist and Duke University researcher, previously served this same position in 2016 when he was nominated by former



President Obama, but faced unexpected opposition this time.

<https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/593914-fda-authorizes-another-antibody-treatment-to-fight-omicron?rl=1>

State

- Today, California will end its indoor masking requirement for vaccinated people, but masks still are the rule for schoolchildren. After today, unvaccinated people will still be required to be masked indoors, and everyone, vaccinated or not, will have to wear masks in higher risk areas like public transit and nursing homes. Note that Los Angeles County still has their own indoor masking requirement while Orange County follows what the state actions are. For schools, the masking mandate will still be in effect until February 28th. At that time, the state will reassess the mandate and make another announcement.

<https://abc7.com/ca-mask-mandate-california-gavin-newsom-indoor/11544606/>

<https://ktla.com/news/california/california-is-keeping-its-school-masking-requirements-for-now-officials-say/>

- On Friday, Asm. Buffy Wicks of Oakland unveiled new legislation that would require all businesses, regardless of size, to mandate COVID-19 vaccinations for all employees and independent contractors, except those who qualify for medical or religious exemptions considered valid by state regulators.

<https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2022/02/endemic-covid-california/>

Medical Director of Infection Prevention

In high risk settings such as healthcare facilities you still have to wear masks, which means we are bound by the healthcare facility rules, not the community rules. In our Los Angeles and Orange County sites regardless of whether the county or the state take down the mask mandate we will still have to continue masking indoors at all AltaMed facilities at all times. The reason why the mask mandate is coming down in the state of California is because the cases are going down and in Southern California the percent positivity rate is about 3%. We are also having a decrease in patients requesting testing and are down under 10% positivity rate at AltaMed. The number of people coming in for upper respiratory tract infection visits has also gone down and is close to our baseline pre surge from last fall. We have decreased our surge tier level down to surge tier level one.

We have been talking with many of the leaders and the clinical leaders about what changes we make during surge level one? Many people have been asking about in person meetings. Now that we are in surge tier level one it is okay to resume in person meetings. However, we still need to continue following the safe environment recommendations and requirements at AltaMed. These include wearing a mask at all times during the meetings, observing six foot physical distancing, and avoiding food or beverages for indoor meeting so that people don't have to remove their masks as well as continuing to wash our hands frequently with



soap and water or hand sanitizer for 20 seconds and frequently cleaning of all the high touch surfaces.

Another thing that will be changing now that we are at surge level one is that we will stop using *MD Labs* which is a contracted third party vendor we used to do additional testing to meet the demand of our patients to have a good access to testing. MD Labs is going to complete the week at Anaheim and Southgate and will no longer be doing testing starting next Monday February 21st. We will be absorbing those tests back into our clinical sites. We are talking to the clinical leaders to make sure that schedules are open and that we do have access for testing for our patients that need it.

Dr. Brown will be presenting today at the *All Provider Meeting* regarding some additional updates to COVID and surge and also at the *Grand Rounds* at 12:15pm.

Human Resources

Employee Health is hosting a booster event at the MSO 2/17 & 2/24, 9am-3pm. You may sign up via signUpGenius. The link was included in the last Covid letter that went out last week.

All centers and Business units should have received a list of unboosted staff. Those who are eligible and unboosted will need to test once a week. If you have any questions please reach out to Employeehealth@altamed.org

Covid-19 sick pay has been reinstated, Governor Newsom signed the bill last week, which retroactively reinstates the hours to January 1st, 2022.

Employees who used their PTO can submit an e-time correction indicating the dates they were out due to covid. The forms must be signed by their manager and submitted directly to payroll at payroll@altamed.org

The payroll team is currently working on loading all unused hours into employees pto banks. The new covid hours are set to expire September 30th, 2022.