



COVID-19 Huddle Notes for January 24, 2022

Government Relations

Top News Lines

Federal

- Senate Democrats made an impassioned case on Wednesday for voting rights legislation to counter an onslaught of new voting restrictions around the country, but they failed to overcome a Republican blockade or unite their own members behind a change in filibuster rules to pass it. More info [here](#).
- Thousands of protesters from across the country — including some of the biggest names in the anti-vaccination movement — descended on the nation's capital Sunday for a rally against vaccine mandates. Almost two years into a coronavirus pandemic that has killed more than 860,000 Americans, the gathering on the National Mall was a jarring spectacle: A crowd of demonstrators, many unmasked, decrying vaccine mandates in the middle of a city that has adopted mask and vaccine mandates to reduce sickness and death from the surge of the virus's omicron variant, which has battered D.C. for weeks. More info [here](#).
- Vaccine boosters provide robust protection against severe disease from the omicron variant in the United States, according to three reports released Friday that use real-world data to show the shots are effective at keeping vaccinated people out of the hospital. More info [here](#).
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State

- This is the time of year where state lawmakers are introducing new bills in the legislature. Given the pandemic and vaccination struggles in hard-hit areas, some lawmakers are seizing this opportunity to introduce legislation to get more people inoculated. As these bills and others progress, the AltaMed GA team will continue to advocate and monitor bills that are a priority to our patients.
- State lawmakers are drafting the toughest covid-19 vaccine legislation in the country, backed by a new pro-vaccine lobbying force promising to counter anti-vaccine activists who have threatened government officials and shut down public meetings across the state. Legislators want to require most Californians to get the shots — not just schoolchildren and health care workers — and eliminate the exemptions that would allow many people to get out of them. More info [here](#).
- On that note, State Sen. Richard Pan (D-Sacramento) is announcing a bill to add COVID-19 vaccines to California's list of required inoculations for attending K-12 schools, a move that would override Gov. Gavin Newsom's scaled-back mandate from last year. More info [here](#).
- Last week, State Sen. Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco) introduced [Senate Bill 866](#), the Teens Choose Vaccines Act, to give minors ages 12-17 the ability to get the shots, even



when their parents do not agree, and to ultimately reduce the transmission of the virus in the state. Currently, only Washington, D.C., has a lower age limit — 11 years — for non-parental consent. More info [here](#).

County

- Fraudulent COVID-19 testing sites have been popping up in South Gate, Bell Gardens and the Southeast Los Angeles area, according to local officials. Officials are warning residents to not fall for them -- releasing photos of a few illegitimate sites that have now been shut down. This past weekend, South Gate shut down four fraudulent sites, according to Diaz. One of them was in the parking lot of the shopping center at Tweedy Boulevard and San Gabriel Avenue, where a CVS store is located. More info [here](#).
- Students in Los Angeles Unified School District will now be prohibited from wearing cloth masks, according to an announcement distributed Saturday by the district. Starting Monday, students must wear “well-fitted, non-cloth masks with a nose wire” at all times, including outdoors. District officials said surgical masks or higher-grade masks were acceptable, and that such masks would be available to students upon request. More info [here](#).

Medical Director of Infection Prevention

Dr. Brown sent out an email about a month ago over the holiday to many of the clinical leaders regarding an update of recommendations for mask wearing. We have always taken the stance that masks were required at AltaMed at all times according to our masking policy and cloth masks alone have not been acceptable, they needed to be utilized with a surgical mask. The newest recommendation during the surge has been that we should be wearing a higher level of protection for source control. It can either be a double surgical mask making sure that it fits around your nose and mouth well and that there are no gaps around you can also do special ties on the sides. An alternative would be a KN95 mask and making sure that it fits you well. The KN95 masks can be ordered through the supply chain, we were given additional KN95 masks through the state. Another alternative would be to wear a fitted N95 mask. N95 masks are considered respirators as they are personal protective equipment and those are masks that are used when there is a patient that could have an airborne transmissible illness.

Dr. Brown will be sending an updated email recommendation for healthcare providers that are in clinical settings and may come in contact with patients where there would be a higher risk that someone could potentially have COVID. You can wear those double surgical masks or KN95 masks for source control, but when you are seeing patients it is recommended to wear the N95 masks. The N95 mask is more appropriate for clinical settings where you are going to have a patient facing encounter. If you are in a non clinical environment and are interested in an N95 mask and have not been fit tested, please make an appointment with Employee health so that you can get fit tested.

There has also been a lot of questions about handing out N95 masks to patients and a lot of information in the media about many pharmacies getting N95 masks to hand out to the community. AltaMed has not yet been given N95 masks to hand out to the community. When that opportunity comes upon us then we will send out additional communication to let you



know how we will be distributing those types of masks. If you have any questions about what Dr. Brown just talked about wait for her email and please contact her if you need further clarification.

Medical grade masks are available to all employees and they should be worn by employees at all times for source control.

Human Resources

As we near the conclusion of our merit and performance process, employees should have received their bonus payment with the January 14 payroll. Employees should now expect to receive their merit increases along with the February 11 payroll. Should there be any questions or concerns regarding the amounts, please contact performancemanagement@altamed.org.

The annual biometric screenings are set to begin next month. Participating in a biometric screening allows employees to obtain a snapshot of key health indicators such as body mass index, blood glucose levels, cholesterol, and blood pressure. Appointments will be made available directly at your site, or at site close to you. The biometric screenings will begin on February 8 and run through March 18. All employees that complete a biometric screening will be eligible to receive points via our Wellness platform, Vitality. These points can be converted into to obtain gifts such as fitness devices and gift cards. In addition, we recommend you set the stage for your 2022 health goals by completing your Vitality Health review. The Vitality Health Review is a brief, confidential online questionnaire. You will be asked questions about your health results, activity, habits, nutrition, lifestyle, mental well-being, and work and home life. This tool helps Vitality guide you in becoming the healthiest person you can be. To sign up for a biometric health screening and/or complete your Vitality Health Review, please visit the Vitality Platform by visiting our Wellness Page in TownSquare. For any questions or issues with the registration please email livewell@altamed.org.

We want to continue reminding all employees that the California Booster mandate on Healthcare Workers remains in effect for compliance for February 1st. All eligible AltaMed employees will be required to comply with this mandate as a condition of employment. AltaMed employee booster events will be scheduled to take place in the coming days and employees that have yet to provide proof of vaccination will begin receiving targeted emails encouraging them to sign up. If employees prefer to receive their booster vaccine at an external location such as their local pharmacy or one of the bigger pharmacies such as Rite Aid or CVS, they may do so, but we ask they submit an image of their vaccine card to our employee health department by email at employeehealth@altamed.org. Once the booster events are set, we will also make the sign up links available in the front page of TownSquare.