



City and County of San Francisco
London N. Breed
Mayor

San Francisco Department of Public Health

Grant Colfax, MD
Director of Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Thursday, January 20, 2022

Contact: Alison Hawkes, Director of Communications, DPH.Press@sfdph.org

*** PRESS RELEASE ***

NEW DATA SHOWS COVID-19 CASES IN SAN FRANCISCO IN DECLINE FOLLOWING OMICRON DRIVEN SURGE

Even as the City reached highest number of cases yet during the pandemic, businesses, schools, and essential services remained open demonstrating that by layering defenses San Francisco can successfully manage the virus

San Francisco, CA — The San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFPDH) announced today that COVID-19 cases are dropping rapidly following the highest peak in the two-year pandemic. Data shows that cases peaked on Jan. 9 with a 7-day average of 2,164 cases per day and have steadily dropped each day since then to 1,076 cases per day on Jan. 12. COVID-19 hospitalizations, which trail a peak in cases, are expected to peak in the next few days at a level that remains within the health care system's bed capacity.

Nevertheless, cases remain extremely high due to the Omicron-fueled surge, and the City has reached a cumulative 700 deaths due to COVID 19 since the pandemic began. People, especially those at higher risk for complications from COVID-19, should continue to be cautious over the next several weeks by layering their defenses, such as upgrading masks to N95 or double layer masks (cloth on top of surgical), improving ventilation, testing when recommended, and staying home if sick or symptomatic. **Vaccinations and boosters, when eligible, remain the most effective tool to protect oneself against the virus.**

"We have seen COVID evolve over the past two years, and as a city, we have evolved with it," said Mayor London Breed. "We know that this virus will be with us for the foreseeable future, but we have the tools in place and the experience managing COVID to not let it completely upend our lives. While we can't predict what will happen, the Omicron variant has proven to us that we can keep our classrooms and businesses open and essential services running. We have shown time and time again that we can adapt to new challenges and take care of ourselves and one another, and moving forward will be no different. We will continue to be resilient and come out ahead while we learn to live with this virus.

The latest surge has marked a distinct difference from prior ones in that the City managed the ultra-transmissible Omicron variant while keeping the economy, schools, and essential City services open. Even as the City has handled staffing disruptions among frontline workers who became infected and had to isolate at home, most people have experienced mild or asymptomatic infections due to the City's high vaccination and booster rates.



San Francisco Department of Public Health

Grant Colfax, MD
Director of Health

City and County of San Francisco
London N. Breed
Mayor

“During this latest surge we have seen many of our friends, family and neighbors become infected,” said Director of Health, Dr. Grant Colfax. “Omicron has changed the game – it is extremely contagious and it’s also less severe and often mild for those who are vaccinated and boosted. Our goal is no longer to prevent every case of COVID. Our goal is no longer to prevent every case of COVID. Instead, our goal is to prevent the worst outcomes of the disease, such as hospitalizations and deaths, and to do this while keeping essential services open, like schools and hospitals. We do that by doubling down on what we know works – getting vaccinated and boosted. And during times of high transmission, we have to be extra vigilant and layer our defenses so that we can prevent spread to those who are most vulnerable and to our frontline workers who need to support core City services.”

Hospitalizations in San Francisco mirror national trends that show the vast majority, about 80%, are among people who are not up to date on their COVID-19 vaccinations, including unvaccinated and vaccinated but not boosted individuals. Among San Franciscans, 82% of the population is vaccinated, and 61% of eligible boosted; while these are some of the highest rates in the nation there is room to fill this gap.

COVID-19 resources:

- For a list of vaccination and booster sites in San Francisco: sf.gov/getvaccinated
- For a list of testing sites in San Francisco: sf.gov/gettested
- For Isolation and Quarantine guidelines: sfdph.org/dph/COVID-19/Isolation-and-Quarantine.asp
- More SF COVID data can be found here: sf.gov/resource/2021/covid-19-data-and-reports

###