



San Francisco Department of Public Health

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*** PRESS RELEASE ***

SAN FRANCISCO RAMPS UP MOBILE COVID-19 TESTING TO TARGET RESOURCES TO HARDEST HIT COMMUNITIES

The new mobile testing vans are part of a strategy to be able to rapidly expand or contract testing as needed as the high-capacity 7th and Brannan test site closes on March 31

San Francisco – The San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) is deploying a new mobile testing strategy to be able to rapidly expand or contract testing as needed and to target resources where they are needed most in neighborhoods with the highest positivity rates that have suffered the greatest impact from the pandemic.

Last week, a mobile testing van operated by OPTUM Serve began administering tests at five access points in the Bayview, SoMa and Civic Center and will continue to offer tests for the next 90 days through the *Increasing Community Access to Testing* program funded by the State. SFDPH also expanded its contract with CityHealth to provide mobile testing at various scheduled locations including the Mission, the Bayview, and the Tenderloin. The CityHealth service, which collects specimens for lab-based PCR tests, is expected to begin the first week of April.

The mobile testing launch comes as SFDPH prepares to close the 7th and Brannan Street “SoMa testing site” on March 31. At peak demand in mid-January, testing at the SoMa site, managed by contracted partner Color Health, rose to an average of 1,200 per day and has since dropped to an average of 150 per day last week.

“We recognize that we need to be practical and nimble in the use of our resources and with a focus on health equity,” said Dr. Naveena Bobba, Deputy Director of Public Health. “We can scale up these mobile testing teams as needed if we have an increase in cases, and we can target locations where we know there is the highest demand and the most need for low-barrier access to testing. For most San Franciscans with health care providers, those providers are where you should go for testing. Over-the-counter test kits are also available from retail stores and other sources.”

SFDPH will evaluate [real-time data on test positivity rates](#) to decide where to station the testing vans on a month-to-month basis. A calendar of where the vans will be parked with dates will be available at sf.gov/gettested.



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SFDPH will keep stationary sites operating where there is a need, including Alemany Farmers Market, Southeast Health Center, and Ella Hill Hutch. Starting April 1, the Alemany Farmers Market testing site in partnership with Color Health is expanding hours on some days.

SFDPH and community partners are distributing over-the-counter test kits to individuals who are medically vulnerable in senior housing facilities, in highly impacted communities, and among City workers performing essential services. In January and February, 230,000 over-the-counter test kits were distributed out.

Testing has played a critical role in San Francisco's COVID-19 emergency response and the data collected has enabled the City to address health and socioeconomic inequities in the deployment of resources, such as placement of vaccine sites in areas with higher test positivity.

As of March 13, San Francisco conducted an average of 4,663 tests per day, down from 16,178 at the peak of the Omicron surge in January. The 7-day positivity rate is 2.4% compared to the peak of 18.9% in January when SFDPH-affiliated sites rapidly scaled up testing capacity in response to the Omicron surge.

SFDPH recommends people get tested if they have [COVID-19 symptoms](#) or when they have had a close contact with someone who has COVID-19; testing five days after an infection to come out of isolation; or when asked by their school, workplace, doctor, or the Department Public of Health.

San Francisco has one of the lowest hospitalization and death rates in the nation, despite its dense population, in large part due to high vaccination (83%) and [booster rates](#), and strong community and business support for other COVID-19 safety protocols, including masking.

SFDPH is keenly focused on reducing health disparities by lowering the impact on communities hardest hit by COVID. In addition to testing, SFDPH is closing gaps in vaccinations and boosters through vaccine events in schools and communities of color and is distributing masks to those communities while masking is strongly recommended for indoor public settings.

Individuals should access tests through their health care provider if they have one. Those who need to get tested at [SFDPH-supported sites](#), can do so at high capacity, mobile, or community-based testing sites. Additional information on testing recommendations and sites can be found at: [sf.gov/gettested](#)

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