



San Francisco Department of Public Health

Daniel Tsai
Director of Health

City and County of San Francisco
Daniel L. Lurie
Mayor

Director's Report for Health Commission Meeting of October 20, 2025

A current overview of issues affecting the state of public health in San Francisco
<https://sf.gov/departments/san-francisco-health-commission/past-meetings>

In alignment with the California Department of Public Health, we will no longer report on COVID-19 case data. More people are now testing themselves at home for COVID-19 and we do not get data from at-home testing. This affects the accuracy of data on testing volume. We will continue to report on [test positivity](#) and will monitor other indicators including hospitalizations.

DPH ENCOURAGES COVID-19 AND FLU VACCINATION THIS RESPIRATORY VIRUS SEASON

As the fall and winter respiratory virus season begins, DPH strongly encourages residents to get the updated COVID and flu vaccines.

The updated COVID and flu vaccines provide protection against the current strains of both viruses and are the best tools available to prevent severe illness and hospitalization. People who have been vaccinated or have been sick with COVID or flu in the past should still get the updated vaccines. People can get the vaccines through their healthcare provider or local pharmacy.

DPH has aligned with the science-based COVID and flu vaccine guidance provided by the [California Department of Public Health](#) and the West Coast Health Alliance. Anyone age 6 months and over can get the COVID and flu vaccines. Both vaccines can be given at the same time. Please visit the [San Francisco Department of Public Health](#) website for the full list of vaccine recommendations.

In addition to getting vaccinated this respiratory virus season, members of the public should consider wearing a well-fitted mask in crowded indoor spaces, including when traveling. People should also stay at home if they are feeling sick.

Visit sf.gov/vax for more information about the vaccines and where to find them.

DIRECTOR TSAI AND MAYOR LURIE PROMOTE VACCINATION AT TOM WADDELL URBAN HEALTH CLINIC

On October 10, the staff at Tom Waddell Urban Health Center proudly hosted Mayor Daniel Lurie and Director of Health Daniel Tsai at a media event to promote vaccinations for the respiratory virus season.



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The Mayor, Director and members of the Tenderloin community were vaccinated in front of members of the press to send a message to the public that COVID-19 and flu vaccines are safe, effective and strongly encouraged.

Learn more at [Get vaccines | SF.gov](#).

WELCOME BACK SOUTH 5 – REOPENING A SKILLED NURSING NEIGHBORHOOD

Earlier this month, Laguna Honda officially reopened the South 5 neighborhood as a skilled nursing unit. South 5 now operates as a standard skilled nursing neighborhood with a focus on complex care—just like it was before the COVID pandemic.

The South 5 team played a critical role during our COVID-19 response and for more than five years, they have cared for residents with COVID-19 with skill and compassion.

Reopening South 5 means more space to serve San Franciscans in need of skilled nursing care, a return home for South 5 residents who transferred at the beginning of the pandemic, and alignment with skilled nursing facility practices nationwide.

NEW RESEARCH PUBLISHED IN THE ANNALS OF FAMILY MEDICINE

We are proud to share that a new study from DPH and UCSF's Center for Excellence in Primary Care, which highlights the powerful impact of pharmacy technicians in primary care teams, was published in the prestigious *Annals of Family Medicine*. This research shows how integrating pharmacy techs into care teams improves efficiency, equity, and clinician well-being — all while enhancing patient care.

Anusha McNamara, Supervisor for Ambulatory Care Clinical Pharmacy Services is the corresponding author. Her co-authors are Clinical Pharmacist Lenny Chan and Tiffany Kenison, Primary Care Director of Equity and Care Experience and Interim Medical Director of Potrero Hill Health Center.

Read the full study: <https://www.annfammed.org/content/23/5/412>

SUPERVISOR BILAL MAHMOOD TOURS ZSFG

On October 14, ZSFG welcomed San Francisco District 5 Supervisor Bilal Mahmood for a site visit and tour. Representing neighborhoods including the Tenderloin, Haight Ashbury, the Western Addition and others, Supervisor Mahmood connected with frontline teams and learned firsthand about ZSFG's innovative programs that serve patients and families across the city. During his visit



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led by Hospital CEO Dr. Susan Ehrlich, Supervisor Mahmood explored several areas of ZSFG including the Family Birth Center where he saw how parents and newborns receive comprehensive support and care and also met members of Team Lily, the only program of its kind in San Francisco that provides addiction care to meet birthing patients where they are—providing them with critical services and linkages to care for substance use disorder.

The visit to the Emergency Department included Dr. Chris Colwell as well as Dr. Caitlin Collins and Mike Texada from the Wraparound Project. Wraparound is a violence intervention program based at ZSFG providing life-saving interventions ensuring patients in crisis receive holistic care that extends beyond the hospital walls with the goal of reducing violent injuries and criminal recidivism among vulnerable San Francisco residents.

We are grateful for Supervisor Mahmood's partnership and advocacy, which help amplify the essential work of ZSFG staff and their tireless efforts to deliver high-quality, inclusive care to all San Franciscans.

CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The Children's Environmental Health Promotions Program has collaborated with the DPH Communications Office to develop and implement a comprehensive Lead Awareness Marketing and Communications Campaign. This initiative is designed to raise public awareness about the dangers of lead exposure, particularly among young children, and to promote preventive measures that can be taken within the home environment.

As a key component of this campaign, the program has created an informational lead prevention poster, which is prominently displayed on hundreds of public transit buses throughout San Francisco. This wide-reaching effort aims to educate families and caregivers about the serious health risks associated with lead exposure and to encourage them to take advantage of the services offered by our program.

There is no safe level of lead exposure in the human body, especially for young children, who are particularly vulnerable to its harmful effects. In response to this public health concern, the Children's Environmental Health Promotions Program provides comprehensive services, including in-home inspections and environmental assessments for residences where children under the age of six live.

In addition to these services, the program distributes educational materials that inform families about common sources of lead in the home and offer practical guidance on how to reduce exposure. These efforts are part of a broader strategy to protect children's health, promote environmental justice, and support safe and healthy living environments for all San Francisco residents.



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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The federal government has entered a shutdown. While these events can create uncertainty, our mission at DPH continues and the essential public health, clinical care, and behavioral health services we provide will continue.

We do not anticipate significant immediate impacts on day-to-day operations. Some federally supported programs may experience delays in approvals, guidance, or reimbursements, but services will continue. For research and grants, funds that have already been awarded should not be affected, and work supported by existing grants can continue. However, no new funding approvals will be issued.

We are closely monitoring the situation and will share updates if anything changes.

COVID-19 UPDATE

As of 10/15:

- San Francisco's 7-day rolling average of COVID test positivity is 2.6%.
- Ten percent of SF residents are fully up to date on their COVID vaccinations and have received the updated vaccine.