



REGULATION OF MASSAGE BUSINESSES AND PRACTITIONERS

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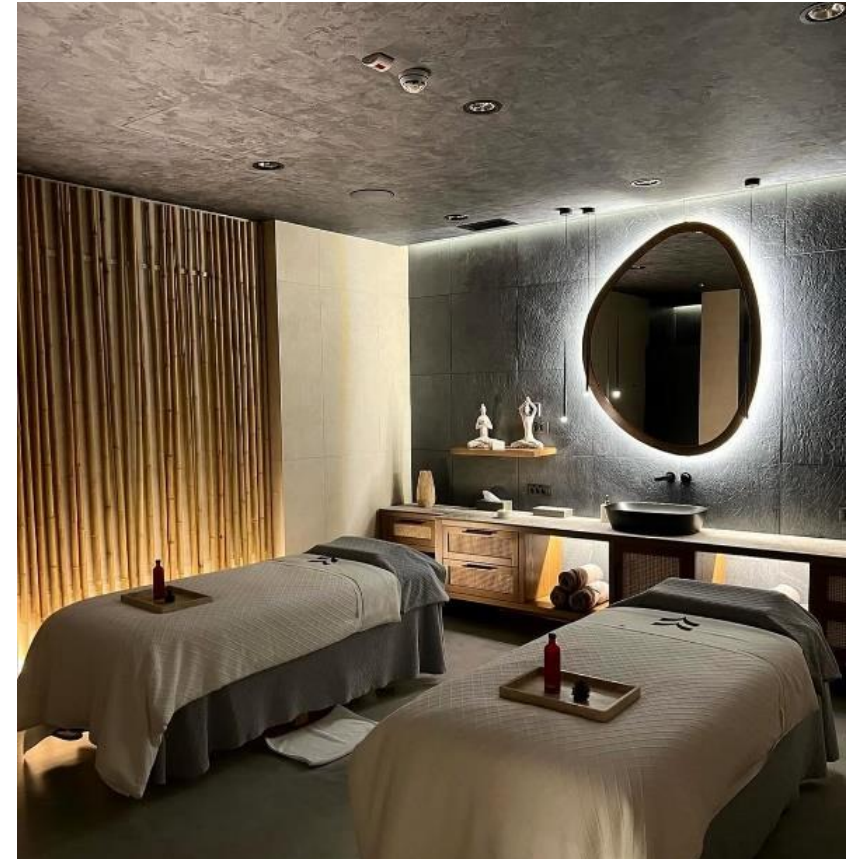
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH BRANCH
AUGUST 17, 2026



POPULATION HEALTH DIVISION
SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Agenda

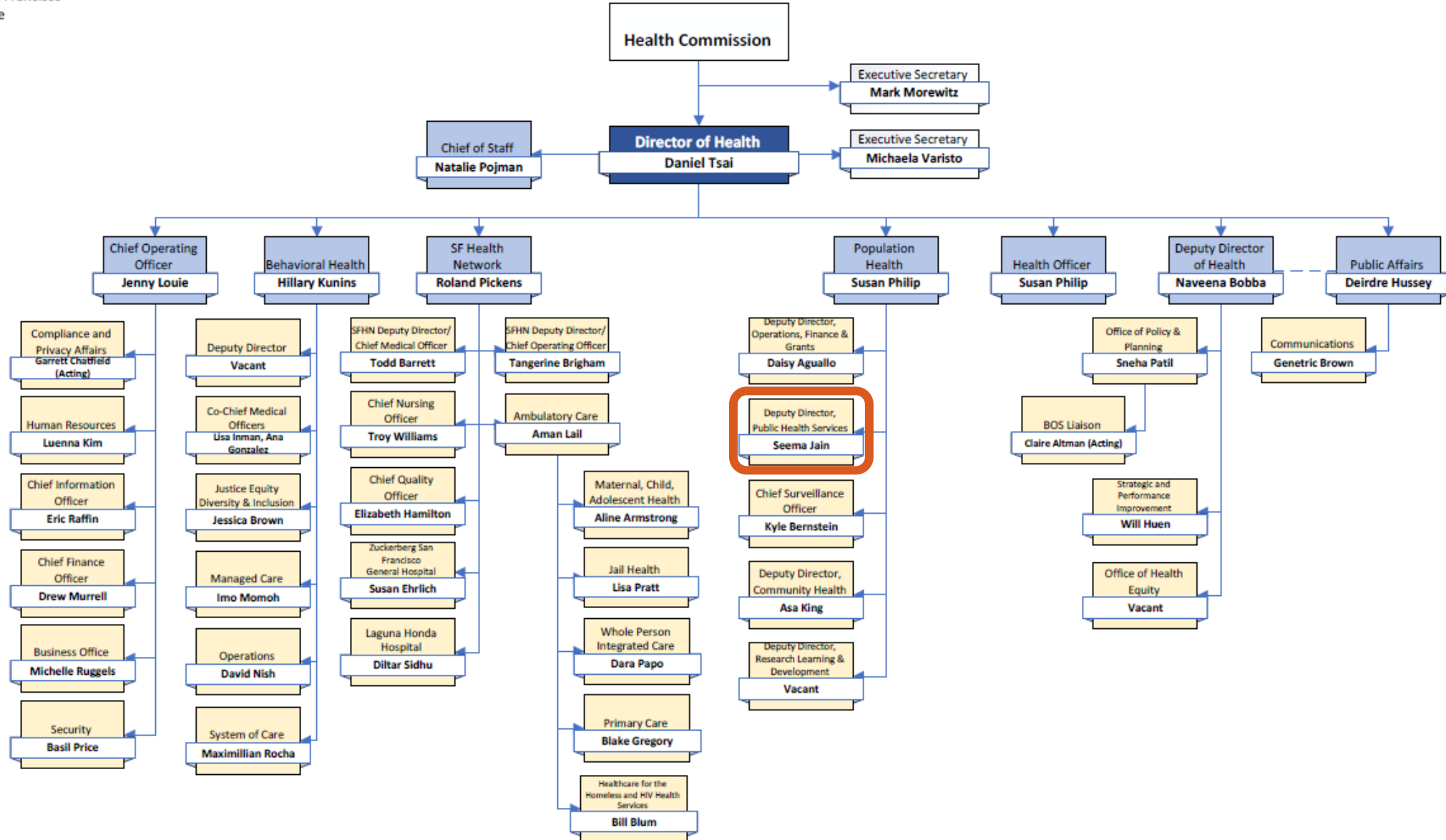
- Organizational Structure
- Importance in combatting labor and human trafficking
 - SFDPH Massage program role
 - Inspections
 - Enforcement
 - Interagency collaboration and joint initiatives
- Operational Challenges
- Future projects and goals





City and County of San Francisco
Daniel L. Lurie
Mayor

San Francisco Department of Public Health
Daniel Tsai
Director of Health

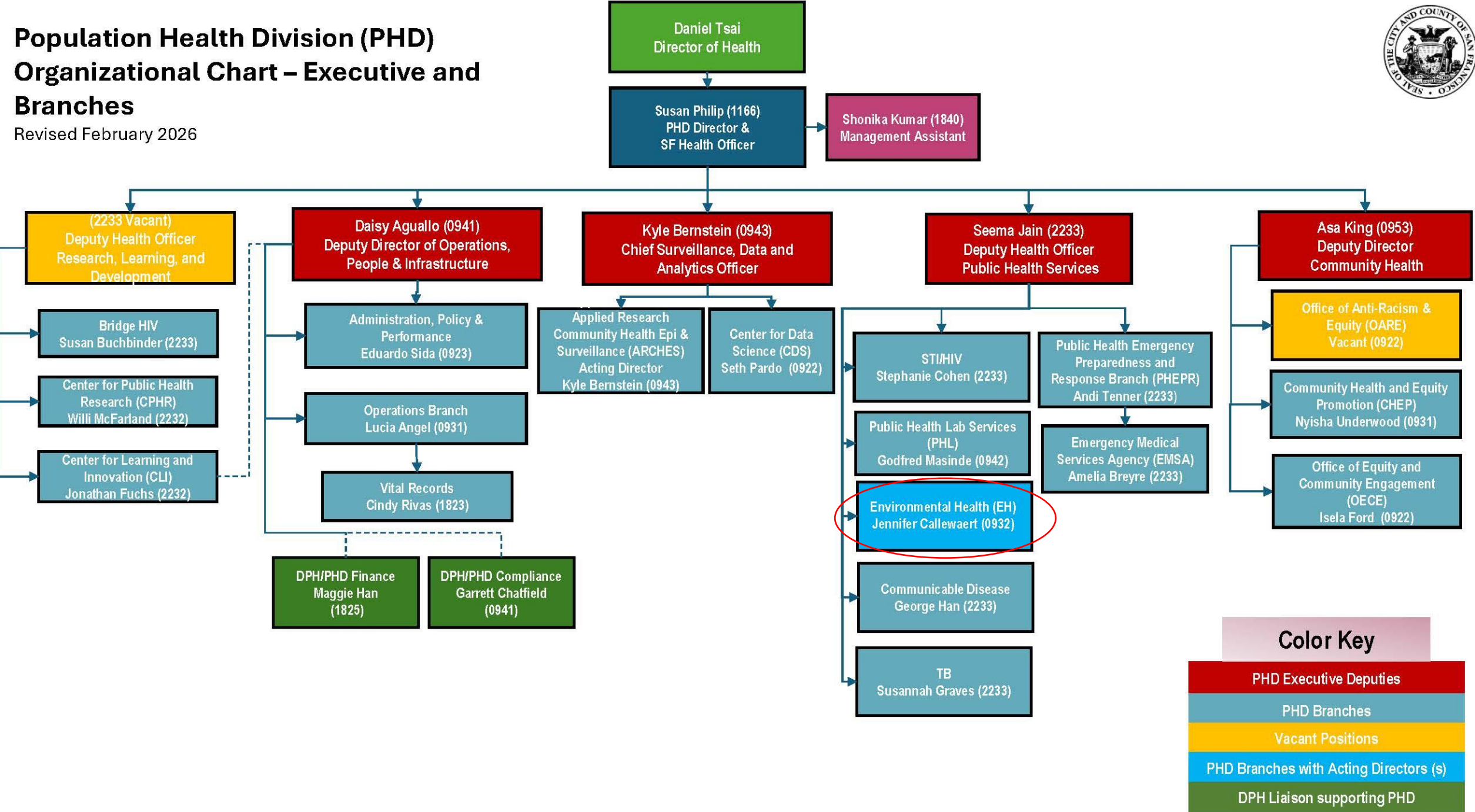




Population Health Division (PHD)

Organizational Chart – Executive and Branches

Revised February 2026



Responsibilities of Massage Program Slide 5



- Permit new applications for massage establishments
- Review construction plans for new massage buildouts
- Conduct routine / complaint inspections
- Legitimate vs Illicit Massage Businesses (IMBs)
 - 208 permitted establishments with approximately 20 percent suspected to be IMBs



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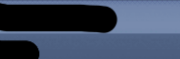
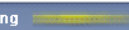
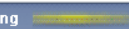
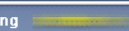
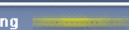
Illicit Massage Businesses and Activity

- Dept of Justice defines IMBs as “a venue that uses the cover of a legitimate bodywork or massage business to provide commercial sex acts to a customer based of sex buyers.”
- Paused and slowed down during the COVID pandemic, but slowly coming back
- Increased number of online customer reviews of IMBs in the past year
 - Reviews show name of illicit business, operating hours, names and aliases of workers, illegal and sexual services that are offered



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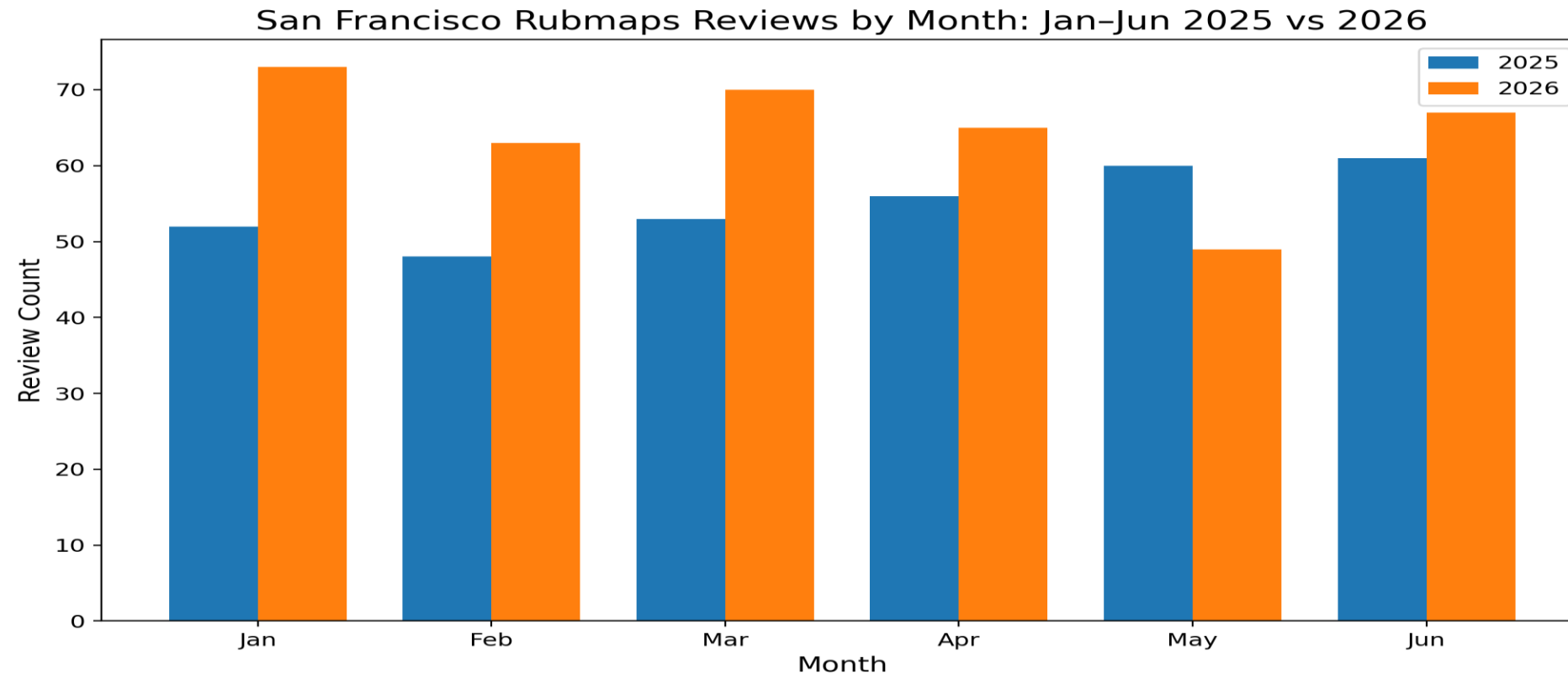
Online IMB Reviews

			Rating 	Read Review
			#3799964	06.22 2025 1
			Rating 	Read Review
			#3786540	06.12 2025
			Rating 	Read Review
			#3774912	06.04 2025
			Rating 	Read Review
			#3753096	05.22 2025
			Rating 	Read Review
			#3750644	05.21 2025
			Rating 	Read Review
			#3738500	05.15 2025
			Rating 	Read Review
			#3722580	05.08 2025
			Rating 	Read Review
			#3706864	05.01 2025
			Rating 	Read Review
			#3673668	04.17 2025
			Rating 	Read Review
			#3640168	04.02 2025
			Rating 	Read Review
			#3623892	03.26 2025 1
			Rating 	Read Review
			#3624672	03.26 2025
			Rating 	Read Review
			#3619756	03.24 2025
			Rating 	Read Review
			#3605656	03.18 2025

			Rating 	Read Review
			#3799964	06.22 2025 1

	12.27 2025 : What happened to this place? They seemed to have a pretty steady business.
	07.02 2024 : When is the best time and day to go here to get a lineup of girls to pick from? I went here once, maybe like 8 or 9pm on a random Tuesday and there were no girls in the waiting room to pick from, I just got paired with a girl. She was cute so I was okay with it, but the experience of getting to see a few and choose is so much hotter if that's possible.
	09.24 2023 : Well they're selling the company I've been at since opening, again....VICE.
	05.09 2023 : Putting a check on kissing should be DFK or LFK not being kiss on chest or something guys
	02.13 2023 : It's better to find a hoe that doesn't needed to or will do massage ... I saw some in TELEGRAM , I think NOMOBROKE had it too
	12.09 2022 : This place sucks! I've walked in here a few times but never stayed to try anyone out because the girls are ugly? And the older lady is rude as hell! Get some hotter girls you dumb and maybe I'll actually stay next time.
	03.19 2022 : Chinese, Japanese and Korean Latin international students coming soon this week-I feel very exciting.
	02.13 2022 : I think it's better to stick up on the price for those , if room fee is 60 pay only 140\$ for FS and if 70/80 then 160/180 only

A comparison of online customer reviews of alleged IMBs between 2025 and 2026 show an increase from last year



Trafficking as a public health issue

- Illicit massage businesses are often used as fronts to conceal and hide trafficking
- Harm to the individual being trafficked but also surrounding community
- Enforce San Francisco Health Code Article 29 to curb human trafficking and illegal sex services



**STOP HUMAN
TRAFFICKING**

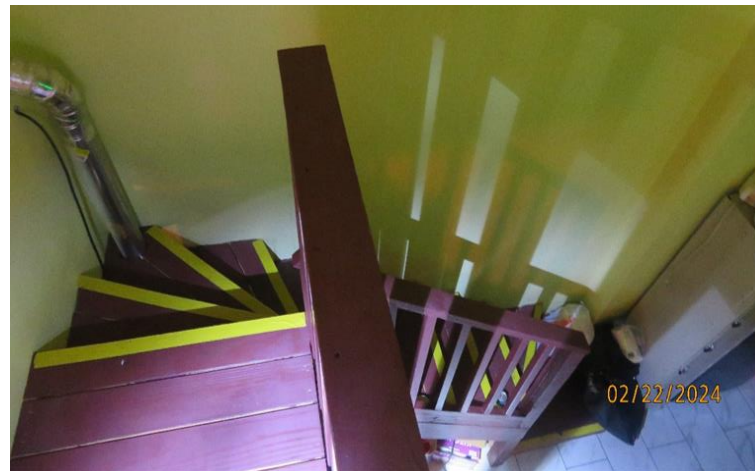
Signs of Potential Human Trafficking

- Workers living on site
 - Excessive amounts of clothing and foods on site indicate possible residential use
- Restricted movement and communication
 - Always referring to the owner or person in charge
 - Fear of speaking freely
- No valid identification and/or massage license
- Locked doors or covered windows
- Lack of transparency and visibility through front windows and doors
- Open past 10pm
- Underaged practitioners
- Cash only payments for services



Examples of Potential Human Trafficking Signs

Slide 11



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What do we do when we find signs of potential trafficking?

- Speak with the employees and practitioners
 - Attempt to ensure they are safe
 - Figure out if they work at other establishments
- If signs of trafficking are observed, enforce corrective actions
 - Ex: Removal raw food, cooking equipment, excessive clothing, bed linens, toiletries
- Issue a separate Notice of Violation to the practitioner to connect potential victims with resources to find housing, build job skills

STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING!

If you or someone you know is being forced to engage in any activity and cannot leave -- whether it is commercial sex, housework, farm work, construction, factory retail, or restaurant work, or any other activity -- text 233-7333 (BE FREE) or call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at:

1-888-373-7888

or the California Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST) at: 1-888-KEY-2-FRE(EDOM) or 1-888-539-2373 to access help and services. Victims of slavery and human trafficking are protected under United States and California law.

The hotlines are:

- Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Toll-free.
- Operated by nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations.
- Anonymous and confidential.
- Accessible in more than 160 languages.
- Able to provide help, referral to services, training, and general information.

City & County of San Francisco

Si a usted, o a alguien que conoce, lo están forzando a hacer algo y no lo quiere -- ya sea sexo por dinero, trabajo de casa, campo agrícola, construcción, fábrica, en una tienda minorista o restaurante, o cualquier otra actividad -- envíe mensaje de texto a 233-7333 (BE FREE) o llame al Centro Nacional de Recursos para la Trata de Personas al:

1-888-373-7888

o a la Coalición de California para Abolir la Esclavitud y la Trata de Personas (California Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking, CAST) al 1-888-KEY-2-FRE(EDOM) o 1-888-539-2373 para obtener ayuda y servicios. Las víctimas de esclavitud y trata de personas están protegidas bajo las leyes de California y los Estados Unidos.

Las líneas de ayuda:

- Están disponibles las 24 horas del día, 7 días por semana.
- Son gratis.
- Están operadas por organizaciones no de gobierno y sin fines de lucro.
- Son anónimas y confidenciales.
- Prestan servicio en más de 160 idiomas.
- Pueden brindarle ayuda, remisión a servicios, capacitación o información general.

如果您本人或您认识的人被迫从事任何活动而无法脱身 -- 无论是性交易、家务劳动、农场工作、建筑、工厂、零售、餐馆工作还是任何其他活动 -- 请发短信 233-7333 (BE FREE) 或打电话给全美反人口贩运资源中心，电话号码

热线电话:

- 每周24小时，每天二十四小时开通。
- 免费。
- 由非营利、非政府组织运营。
- 匿名和保密。
- 有160多种语言拨打。
- 能够提供帮助、转介服务、培训和一般信息。

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DPH Partnerships

- San Francisco Planning Department
- San Francisco Police Department
- Department of Building Inspection
- San Francisco City Attorney
- San Francisco District Attorney
- California Massage Therapy Council (CAMTC)
- Community Health Equity and Promotion (CHEP)
- San Francisco Massage Council



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Inter-department Enforcement Operations

- **Empire Relaxation Spa**

- Unpermitted illicit massage business being used as a house of prostitution
- DPH and Planning sent notice of violations and City Attorney's Office filed a lawsuit
- Business and property owner settlement of \$275,000
- Injunction on property prohibiting any massage or personal health services at this location for 10 years

- **Crystal Spa**

- Unpermitted massage use, unapproved residential use and living quarters, unapproved construction of a staircase
- DBI issued corrective actions to the property owner leading to removal of the staircase and living quarters



San Francisco shuts down Tenderloin massage parlor linked to prostitution allegations



Operational Challenges

- Multi-agency coordination often difficult
- Rate at which new illicit activity pops up
 - Discreet strategies used by illicit businesses
- Practitioner mistrust and fear



How we are addressing challenges

■ Collaboration

- San Francisco Police Department (SFPD)
- San Francisco Planning and Zoning
- San Francisco City Attorney's Office
- Community Health Equity and Promotion (CHEP) and Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD)

■ Trainings

- California Massage Therapy Council (CAMTC)
- SF Collaboration Against Human Trafficking's Annual Conference
- Human Trafficking Training Center (HTTC)



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Thank you!

Questions?

EHmessage@sfdph.org

<https://www.sf.gov/information--massage-operating-requirements>



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