



City and County of San Francisco
Daniel L. Lurie
Mayor

Director's Report for Health Commission Meeting of May 4, 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 (<https://www.sf.gov/resource--2021--covid-19-data-and-reports>).

Overdoses decline in 2026 Q1

DPH Director Daniel Tsai held a monthly media availability on April 24 to announce that there were 26% fewer fatal overdoses in the first quarter of 2026 compared to the same period in 2025. According to preliminary data from the San Francisco Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, there were 148 overdose deaths in January through March 2026, compared to 199 in the same people last year.

Director Tsai, joined by Aman Lail, head of DPH Ambulatory Care, and Department of Emergency Management Director Mary Ellen Carroll, also spoke to DPH taking ownership of the San Francisco Street Engagement team, effective July 1. Dr. Phillip Coffin, of the DPH Center on Substance Use and Health, joined to speak on the Health Alert issued on April 23 regarding non-fentanyl opioids in counterfeit pills that caused an overdose death in April.

Watch a recording of the media Availability here: [4.24.26 SFDPH Accidental Overdose Update Media Availability](#).

Health alert: Non-fentanyl synthetic opioids detected in SF

On April 23, DPH Behavioral Health Services issued a Health Alert to warn the public about powerful non-fentanyl synthetic opioids that have been detected in a recent fatal overdose. [Health Alert: Fatal Overdose Involving Novel Synthetic Opioids | SF.gov](#)

N-Propionitrile Chlorphine (also known as cychlorphine) and N-Desethyl Isotonitazene are two non-fentanyl, synthetic opioids that have been detected in overdose decedents across the United States, including a person who died of overdose in San Francisco in April 2026. The tragedy marks



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the first time cychlorphine—estimated to be 10 times more powerful than fentanyl and undetectable by fentanyl test strips—has been detected in San Francisco.

The decedent is believed to have ingested counterfeit pills containing these synthetic opioids, as well as ethyl bromazolam, a benzodiazepine that is not approved by the FDA. Counterfeit pills can look like prescription medications from a licensed pharmacy but contain unknown and potentially lethal substances, putting people at risk for overdose. There is no way to tell from appearance alone whether a pill is safe. Even a fraction of a counterfeit pill can kill someone. The safest choice is to avoid any pill that was not prescribed to you by a pharmacy, even if it was given to you by a friend or family member.

SF Street Team Update

The San Francisco Street Team will be shifting to DPH oversight as of July 1, 2026. The Neighborhood Street Team work has been led by the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) for the past year, during which time our DPH clinical teams have demonstrated incredible progress in working with some of our most complex individuals ("shared priority cases") and helping them get connected to clinical services and into shelter or housing. This work will continue under DPH but remain in close partnership with the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing and DEM.

With DPH leading this next phase of outreach and coordination for our street teams, we have the structure in place to rapidly provide the health interventions that people with complex needs such as substance use disorders, serious mental illness and chronic health conditions need to reach long-term stability. This reflects a deliberate shift toward a more health-focused, relationship-based model, one that directly connects street-level outreach with the clinical care systems that produce lasting results, including treatment, medication management, stabilization, and ongoing care coordination. A unified structure allows a single leader to triage in real time, pairing behavioral health engagement with direct outreach when needed. Street teams will continue to provide compassionate, relationship-based care in the field, while placing greater emphasis on facilitating transitions to indoor care, using engagement tools and supportive incentives to encourage movement to services and housing when individuals are ready and appropriate options are available. By aligning street response functions within a more unified structure, we can more effectively work toward our dual mission of bringing people in crisis on our streets into care and ensuring welcoming public spaces for the broader community.

DPH Issues Systemwide Safety & Security Assessment

Following the tragic death of UCSF social worker Alberto Rangel, who was assaulted by a patient in Ward 86 at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital in December 2025, DPH conducted a comprehensive, systemwide safety and security assessment.



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DPH activated an Incident Management Team of more than 100 leaders from the Department and UCSF. The assessment covered the full DPH system: hospitals, clinics, health centers, jail health services, administrative offices, and field-based programs. The assessment was informed by input from thousands of frontline staff through town halls, surveys, listening sessions, and direct outreach.

The comprehensive assessment identified ten areas for targeted improvement. Since December, significant actions were taken in each area, with many additional improvements planned or in progress:

1. Clear and timely responses to assess and manage security threats
2. Security measures at ZSFG's Building 80/90
3. Proactive approach to security and incident mitigation
4. Improve facility security through environmental design
5. Clear and transparent safety measures
6. Effective and impactful staff training for emergencies
7. Consistent safety and security policies, including a clear triage process
8. Security protocol for field staff
9. Consistent incident communications and notifications
10. Consistent availability of duress devices and call routing

DPH has committed \$15 million annually to support a modernized, systemwide approach to safety and security.

The full assessment was sent to all staff and publicly released on April 22, 2026 and can be found [here](#).

Celebrating a Decade of Leadership at ZSFG Hospital

Please join me in congratulating Dr. Susan Ehrlich on a remarkable decade of service as Chief Executive Officer of Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center. Over the past ten years, Dr. Ehrlich has demonstrated extraordinary leadership and commitment to the patients, staff, and communities ZSFG serves. She has transformed and continues to strengthen San Francisco's only public health hospital for our most in need residents. Under her leadership, ZSFG remains a resilient and respected institution, and she brings a deep understanding of patient needs to her leadership role through her continued rounds as a primary care physician in the Richard H. Fine People's Clinic.

Even while staff are confronted with everyday emergencies and larger crises, the hospital always keeps a laser-like focus on its core mission, vision and values of equity, safety, quality, care experience, developing its people and providing sound financial stewardship. Focusing on its True North and under Dr. Ehrlich's guidance, the ZSFG Executive Leadership Team drives improvements



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to ensure ZSFG achieves its strategic goals by using A3 Thinking, Countermeasure Summaries, and the Daily Management System guiding improvement work that keeps ZSFG at the cutting edge of service. Certified in Lean Management, a philosophy centered on continuous improvement and problem-solving, Dr. Ehrlich fosters an environment where staff regularly evaluate and refine their practices, always learning, always adapting. This dynamic approach creates a responsive health care system that prioritizes and centers patient well-being and safety.

Over the past decade, Dr. Ehrlich has led ZSFG through periods of profound change, challenge, and transformation, from major technology overhauls and through a global pandemic. The accomplishments below represent just a few of the milestones that have defined her tenure and strengthened ZSFG's mission.

- **Technology upgrades:** Successfully launched and fully integrated the Epic medical records system across ZSFG operations. Staff now rely on its seamless functionality to track patient health throughout the delivery system and generate critical data, supporting the hospital's journey of continuous improvement. Launched the SAFE system, so that staff can better identify and measure improvements in quality, safety and patient experience.
- **COVID-19 pandemic:** Mobilized ZSFG's full resources at the outset of the pandemic; preparing isolation rooms, securing PPE, and establishing clinical care protocols, helping make San Francisco a national leader in response. Dr. Ehrlich guided ZSFG's clinical teams through repeated COVID-19 surges while maintaining the highest standards of care with excellent, best-practice treatment, expanded testing, robust vaccine and booster programs and continued education and outreach to the community.
- **Mpox:** ZSFG was at the forefront of this emergency. The hospital quickly adapted and pivoted when confronted with the emerging threat of mpox and was a model for the equitable distribution of vaccines, quickly establishing the largest vaccination site in San Francisco.
- **Access and flow:** Oversaw the performance improvement teams to optimize patient access and flow throughout the hospital, making sure that patients move to the next most appropriate phase of healing while freeing up acute and psychiatric care beds.
 - The Emergency Department's (ED) "Left without Being Seen" rates have been sustainably at or below our goal of 2%, an industry standard, since March 2025.
 - With the exception of our two busiest winter months, ED ambulance diversion has been consistently under 40% over the last year.
 - Peak boarding for physical health beds in ED, ICU, and PACU is down from 31 to just 23 on our most recent 12-month rolling average.
 - Through partnerships with residential care programs, increased number of truly acute psychiatric patient days by more than 25%, which is up nearly ten percentage points compared to last year's baseline.
- **Capital Improvements:** Supported the opening of UCSF Pride Hall, a state-of-the-art five-story research and education facility that now supports faculty and staff in the



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transformational research conducted by our UCSF partners. Dr. Ehrlich also launched an ambitious multi-year conversion of Building 5 into a seismically safe, state-of-the-art Ambulatory Care Center of Excellence, funded through city bond funds, the State of California, and the SF General Hospital Foundation. Some milestones include:

- Rehabilitation Center and Adult Urgent Care Clinic, now fully operational.
- Opened a new Clinical Lab in 2M with a state-of-the-art tracking system, enabling significantly greater test volume processed faster.
- Co-located the Hematology/Oncology Clinic with the Infusion Clinic on 4C, improving team collaboration and patient access to the full spectrum of cancer care.
- New Dialysis Clinic, opening later this year with a patient-friendly layout and increased treatment capacity.
- New Cystoscopy and Urology Clinic opening later this year, relieving longstanding pressure on the Building 25 OR.
- New Psychiatric Emergency Services completing next year as a key component of the city's comprehensive behavioral health system.
- Building 5's seismic upgrade projects have reached 90% completion.

These are just a few examples of Dr. Ehrlich's contributions to the success of ZSFG and how she has secured it as a health resource for today and for future generations of San Francisco. Thank you for your unwavering dedication to the health and well-being of all of our residents.

ZSFG Launches New Epic Sepsis Pathway

ZSFG has rolled out a new Epic Sepsis Pathway on April 15 to strengthen early recognition and coordinated care for one of the hospital's most urgent and complex conditions. Developed over two years by a multidisciplinary team across the Emergency Department, inpatient units, pharmacy, informatics, and quality, and the KPO team, the pathway brings all key sepsis interventions (such as antibiotics, blood cultures, lactate measurement, and fluids) into a single, coordinated workflow, ensuring that patients receive the right care at the right time. This standardized approach supports faster, evidence-based care while reducing the cognitive burden on clinicians. Early clinician activation in Epic allows the pathway to guide care, support team coordination, and ensure that time-sensitive interventions are not missed.

ZSFG Neonatal Nurses Receive 2026 CPQCC Janet Pettit Memorial Award

ZSFG's Nursing Director of Maternal & Child Department and Clinical Nurse Educator with our NICU, Shilu Ramchand, RN, MSN, CNS and Liezl Uy, RN, have been selected as 2026 recipients of the California Perinatal Quality Care Collaborative (CPQCC) Janet Pettit Memorial Award. This prestigious award recognizes Registered Nurses, advanced practice nurses (NNPs, CNSs), or NICU quality improvement (QI) teams who have made significant contributions to neonatal quality improvement or who are emerging leaders in the neonatal care community. Shilu and Liezl were honored for their outstanding leadership and measurable improvements in neonatal outcomes,



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such as improving care for neonates affected by opioid withdrawal syndrome while supporting families in recovery, achieving a 40% relative risk reduction in treatment with morphine, shortening duration of treatment and reduced length of stay, amongst other improvements.

Please join us in congratulating Shilu and Liezl for their dedication, compassion, and commitment to delivering the highest quality care for our smallest and most vulnerable patients. Their leadership reflects the best of ZSFG.

COVID-19 Update

As of 04/29:

- San Francisco's 7-day rolling average of COVID test positivity is 1.3%.
- Twenty-five percent of SF residents are fully up to date on their COVID vaccinations and have received the updated vaccine.