



City and County of San Francisco
Daniel L. Lurie
Mayor

San Francisco Department of Public Health

Daniel Tsai
Director of Health

Director's Report for Health Commission Meeting of September 21, 2026

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.

Fatal Overdoses Decline as More San Franciscans Receive Treatment

On September 15, Health Director Dan Tsai announced that fatal overdoses in San Francisco declined 24% from January through August 2026 compared with the same period last year. During DPH's monthly media availability, Director Tsai also reported 49 fatal overdoses in August, the same number recorded in August 2025.

Behavioral Health Services Director Dr. Hillary Kunins highlighted significant growth in the numbers of people receiving substance use treatment across DPH's continuum of care. Since fiscal year 2020-21, DPH has seen:

- A 62% increase in people receiving outpatient substance use treatment
- A 37% increase in people receiving residential treatment
- A 107% increase in people receiving step-down recovery housing
- A 64% increase in people taking medications for opioid use disorder

These increases reflect DPH's continued work to expand access to treatment and recovery services across San Francisco.

Living Proof Campaign Honored During National Recovery Month

On September 15, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors recognized the 11 San Franciscans featured in DPH's Living Proof campaign for courageously sharing their addiction and recovery stories and making a positive impact in their communities. Championed by Supervisor Matt Dprsey during National Recovery Month, the commendation highlighted the campaign's work to show that addiction treatment is effective and available while reducing the stigma that can prevent people from seeking support.



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Since launching in 2024, the multimedia campaign has reached millions of people. The campaign, fully funded through a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention grant, is now in its third and final phase, with online, cable, radio, streaming and outdoor advertisements running through the end of the year.

DPH Urges MPOX Awareness and Vaccination Before Folsom Street Fair Events

DPH urges awareness of mpox as the Folsom Street Fair and associated events quickly approach. The two-dose mpox vaccine is strongly encouraged for people at risk.

As of August 24, in 2026, over 70 mpox cases have been reported in San Francisco, of which eight were clade I mpox cases. DPH reported the first confirmed clade I mpox case in San Francisco in [April 2026](#). Currently all confirmed clade I mpox cases in the city have been associated with international travel. Anyone can get mpox, but most reported cases in the United States are among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, as well as transgender persons who have sex with men.

In the United States, both clade I and clade II mpox are spread primarily through close skin-to-skin contact, including during sexual activity. Both clade I and clade II mpox cause similar symptoms, which may start with flu-like symptoms such as a fever, swollen lymph nodes or fatigue; followed by a rash that looks like pimples or blisters and can be painful. People who have a rash that looks like mpox should contact their healthcare provider to get tested and talk to their partners so they can take steps to prevent the spread of infection.

DPH strongly encourages [people at risk for mpox](#) to receive both doses of the mpox vaccine. In addition to getting vaccinated, condom use and reducing the number of sexual partners can further decrease the risk of mpox infection.

The mpox vaccine is available through healthcare providers and local pharmacies. Those who do not have insurance or are having difficulty accessing care may visit the locations listed at sf.gov/mpox.

ZSFG Hosts Third Annual Milk Drive Event

On August 26, ZSFG Hospital hosted its third annual Milk Drive Bank event in celebration of National Breastfeeding Awareness Month. The drive collected more than 1,000 ounces of donated human milk. These donations help nourish medically fragile infants across the country, reinforcing ZSFG's commitment to health equity and compassionate care. "This event reflects who we are as a hospital – a community that leads with compassion, advances health equity, and cares for every person with dignity," shares Dr. Susan Ehrlich, "Everyone ounce counts. Every baby deserves a healthy start." Thank you to ZSFG's Family Birth Center. The NICU team, CNO Gillian Otway and all staff, donors, and community partners who helped make this year's Milk Drive a success! Their



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leadership continues to set the bar statewide for exclusive breast/chest feeding rates and culturally responsive care.

ZSFG Recognized by US News & World Report in Six Care Areas

US News & World Report recently recognized ZSFG Hospital as “high performing” in six adult procedures and conditions including COPD, diabetes, heart failure, kidney failure, and leukemia/lymphoma/myeloma, reaffirming the hospital’s clinical excellence. With 88% of patients willing to recommend ZSFG, meeting or exceeding national benchmarks, the hospital reflects patient confidence and satisfaction. This recognition honors the hospital’s unwavering dedication to delivering top-quality, equitable healthcare to all San Franciscans, regardless of background or situation. As ZSFG’s Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Gabriel Ortiz shared, “Every day, our physicians, nurses, advanced practice providers, pharmacists, therapists, social workers, care coordinators, community partners, and support staff bring their expertise, compassion, and unwavering commitment to high-quality, equitable care to patients with complex medical and social needs. This recognition is a testament to their dedication and to the mission of ZSFG.”

Building Pathways to Health Equity: SFHN Primary Care’s Summer Internship Experience

This summer, San Francisco Health Network (SFHN) Primary Care partnered with Opportunities for All (OFA) and Black to San Francisco (Black2SF) to offer local students hands-on exposure to careers in healthcare, public health, and community service. Led by Primary Care Health Coordinator Kenneth Hill for Black2SF and Primary Care Hospital Eligibility Worker Supervisor Cheryl Thornton for the Epidemiology in Action cohort for OFA students, interns took part in a structured six-week program. Students worked and participated in sessions on health equity, patient experience, quality improvement, nutrition, epidemiology, workplace safety, and community-based research.

Student-led projects examined pharmacy access in Bayview-Hunters Point, Black infant mortality, and overdose disparities among Black men. The projects deepened students’ understanding of the social and structural factors that influence health outcomes and the critical role Primary Care plays in advancing equity.

SFHN Primary Care staff served as mentors, presenters, and hosts, helping students strengthen their skills, confidence, and interest in health and public-service careers. We extend our appreciation to all staff and partners who contributed to this year’s internship experience, reinforcing SFHN’s leadership in creating pathways for young people to enter and shape the healthcare workforce.

Public Health Education at All My Usos Family Day

On August 15, the Community Health Equity and Promotion (CHEP) Branch Tobacco-Free Project (TFP) co-sponsored the 11th Annual All My Usos Family Day BBQ at Gilman Park in Bayview Hunters Point. All My Usos is a community organization that serves an essential role in providing resources



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and support to the Pacific Islander community. The word "uso" translates to brother or sister in Samoan.

At the event, TFP promoted tobacco prevention services, including upcoming tobacco cessation classes at the Southeast Family Health Center and the All My Usos' Tautua Nei (translates to "Breathe for the Next Generation") tobacco cessation class, which provides culturally centered tobacco-free education and services to the Pacific Islander community. Additionally, DPH staff provided public health education on the impact of consumption of sugary drinks, senior fall prevention, and overdose prevention. Staff completed 12 one-on-one overdose prevention trainings; and distributed 20 boxes of naloxone and overdose prevention materials.

Onboard SF Frontline Worker Summit

On August 11, CHEP in collaboration with Getting to Zero SF and staff in the Office of Equity and Community Engagement and Office of Health Equity held the 2nd annual OnBoard SF: A Frontline Worker Summit to orient new frontline workers to the sexual and drug user health landscape. Onboard SF serves as a key annual touchpoint for aligning efforts, deepening professional skills, and strengthening connections across the city's public health workforce. Over 100 attendees representing community-based organizations, clinical providers, and public health professionals attended the event and participated in sessions on a wide array of topics, including culturally informed service delivery, vicarious trauma, and services for people who use drugs. Glide, San Francisco Community Health Center, San Francisco AIDS Foundation, Rafiki Coalition, and End Hep C SF were key community partners in planning the event.

Behavioral Health Center at ZSFG Achieves Back-to-Back Wins: Successful Licensing Survey and 100% MHRC Occupancy

On September 1, DSS Community Care Licensing (CCL) surveyors completed their annual visit to the Residential Care for the Elderly (RCFE) facility at the San Francisco Behavioral Health Center at ZSFG, and the survey concluded with no citations issued and no deficiencies identified. Thank you to Charisse Li, the RCFE team, and the Regulatory Team for their exemplary preparation and professionalism, which supported a smooth survey process. This success comes on the heels of another milestone at BHC: the Mental Health Rehabilitation Center (MHRC) recently exceeded its hospital-wide KPI of 95% occupancy, reaching 100%. As a locked sub-acute treatment setting for individuals with serious behavioral health needs under conservatorship, the MHRC is a critical part of the behavioral health continuum, supporting flow out of inpatient psychiatry and ensuring patients receive care at the right time and place. Special thanks to Charisse Li, Ingrid Thompson, Yifang Qian, Joan Torres, and Angelica Almeida for their work in accomplishing a goal many years in the making.



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Partnership with DPH and SF Fire Department

The CHEP Branch's Community and Home Injury Prevention Program for Seniors (CHIPPS) team has partnered with the San Francisco Fire Department (SFFD) to enhance in-home safety for older adults and people with disabilities. Each week, SFFD paramedics join the CHIPPS team during home safety assessments to install SF Life Line kits, which provide people with limited English proficiency with a packet of essential health and medication information mounted on their refrigerator. This helps first responders quickly understand a patient's medical needs and reduces delays caused by language barriers when first responders arrive to in-home emergencies. Since the partnership began on August 20, 2026, over 25 Life Line kits have been installed. During visits, paramedics also check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and provide education on fire extinguisher use. This collaboration strengthens coordination across city services and supports patient-centered safety and emergency preparedness for vulnerable community members.

DPH and UCSF Celebrate 153 Years of Partnership

On August 28, ZSFG and DPH celebrated 153 years of partnership between DPH and UCSF—a shared commitment to advancing research, transforming care, and improving the health of our communities. The enduring bond has benefited generations of San Franciscans, for instance the longstanding partnership between DPH and UCSF is central to the strength and identity of our residency program at ZSFG Hospital. Together, it unites academic excellence with a deep public service mission, ensuring that cutting edge clinical training is grounded in the reality of caring for a diverse community. This collaboration is especially vital as ZSFG is the city's safety-net hospital, and San Francisco's only Level I Trauma Center and where our residents learn to provide high stakes, high impact emergency care for anyone who comes through our doors. The DPH-UCSF partnership not only supports exceptional clinical training but reinforces our shared commitment to equitable access, public health innovation, and the future of emergency medicine. Together, we honor this enduring collaboration and look forward to the innovation, partnership, and impact still ahead.

Jail Health Nurse Manager Recognized with Gene O'Connell Award

Nicole Joe, RN, a Nurse Manager with Jail Health Services was named a 2026 Gene O'Connell Award recipient, recognizing nurse leaders who advance improvement, support their colleagues, and advocate for the nursing profession. On September 2, Director Dan Tsai, Director and Chief Administrative Officer for Ambulatory Care, Aman Lail, joined JHS in recognizing Nicole and celebrating this well-deserved honor.

Nicole's recognition reflects the leadership, clinical excellence, compassion, and commitment to equitable care she brings to her work every day. It also shines a light on the important work of correctional health nursing, providing high-quality care in a uniquely complex environment and ensuring that people in our jails are treated with dignity, compassion, and respect.



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California Board of Pharmacy Renews ZSFG Pharmacy Licenses

Following the California Board of Pharmacy's annual survey in late August, both the hospital and sterile compounding licenses have been successfully renewed for another year. The survey included routine and sterile compounding inspections, observations in the sterile compounding area, tours of clinical medication rooms, a review of 12 months of records, and staff interviews. A special thank you to Dr. Susan Ehrlich, Heath Stoyer, Swati Patel, Selma Yamamoto, the sterile compounding team, and the entire Pharmacy Department for their preparation, professionalism, and commitment to excellence, and to DPH's Regulatory Team for their stewardship. Please join me in celebrating this successful renewal and congratulations to the ZSFG Pharmacy team.

Heat Safety

KTVU featured Dr. Andi Tenner sharing guidance on finding relief during extreme heat: [People Look for Heat Relief in San Francisco featuring Dr. Andi Tenner \(17:15 minute mark\)](#)

Staff Recognition

The San Francisco Examiner highlighted ZSFG Chief Performance Excellence Officer Dr. Hemal Kanzaria as a candidate for San Franciscan of the Year: [VOTE for the Examiner's San Franciscan of the Year](#)

COVID-19 Update

As of 09/16:

- San Francisco's 7-day rolling average of COVID test positivity is 10.3%.
- Twenty-six percent of SF residents are fully up to date on their COVID vaccinations and have received the updated vaccine.