

March 4, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

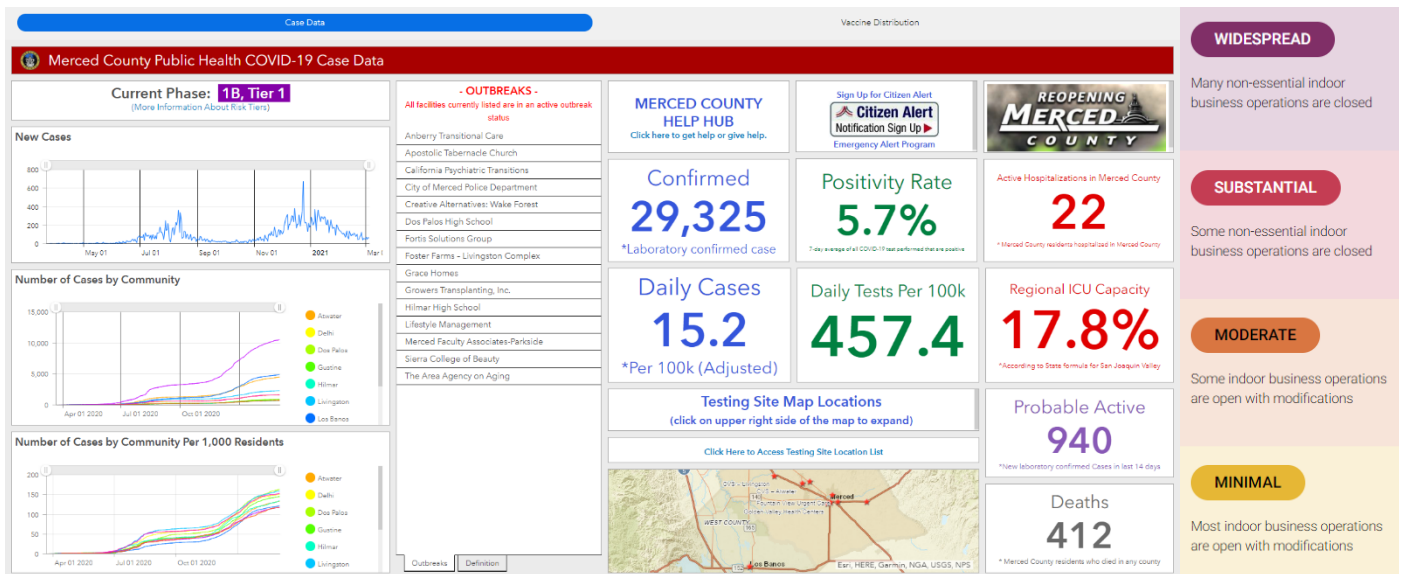
MEDIA CONTACT: covid19media@countyofmerced.com

COVID-19 DAILY STATUS REPORT

PLEASE NOTE: This is an evolving situation. More information will be distributed as it becomes available. For the most up to date information, please visit: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus. Additional information is available at www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus. These status reports are released daily on normal business days. Statistics will continue to be updated on weekdays at www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirusstats.

CURRENT STATUS:

- As of 3:30 p.m. Thursday, March 4, 2021, there are 29,325 confirmed cases (+61 from Wednesday) of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) in Merced County. Approximately 940 of those cases are active, and 412 have died.
- Current Risk Tier: Purple (Widespread).** Many non-essential indoor business operations are closed.
 - Tiers are determined by the California Department of Public Health based on test positivity and adjusted case rate. Counties can move into more or less restrictive tiers based on these factors. Weekly tiers are updated on Tuesdays. More information: www.covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/



View this interactive dashboard online at:

Desktop: English: <http://dashboard-desktop.reopenmercedcounty.com> Spanish: <http://dashboard-desktop-spanish.reopenmercedcounty.com>
Mobile: English: <http://dashboard-mobile.reopenmercedcounty.com> Spanish: <http://dashboard-mobile-spanish.reopenmercedcounty.com>

- Based on information provided by individuals who test positive, Public Health staff will continue to assess risks of exposure and contact any affected individuals.
- Due to privacy laws, the Public Health Department cannot release identifying information related to positive cases.
- In California, there are 3,488,467 confirmed cases and 53,048 deaths.

RECENT ACTIVITIES & UPDATES:

- Merced County Public Health continues to coordinate with federal, state and local partners to further prepare us for future impacts. This includes working with the California Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to monitor COVID-19.
- Vaccination Information/Notifications: www.vaccinatemercedcounty.com
- Today, the Merced County Department of Public Health confirmed five additional deaths related to COVID-19:
 - Gender:
 - Female: 4
 - Male: 1
 - Age:
 - 18-34: 0
 - 35-49: 0
 - 50-64: 0
 - 65+: 5
 - Underlying Health Conditions:
 - Yes: 4
 - No: 0
 - Unknown: 1
- This week, the Merced County Department of Public Health provided a COVID-19 update to the Merced County Board of Supervisors:
<https://mercedcountyca.new.swagit.com/videos/113885?ts=2276>
- **Please note:** The State is in the process of launching a new vaccine-scheduling platform known as “My Turn.” That platform is not yet available in Merced County and more information will be provided once it’s made available in coming weeks. Those who have already received their first dose of the vaccine with the Merced County Department of Public Health will be notified by a third-party agency called HR Support to schedule their second dose in order to complete the vaccination series and become fully vaccinated.
- In an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19 by preventing large group gatherings, the County’s regional parks (Lake Yosemite, Hagaman Park and Henderson Park) will be closed on Saturdays and Sundays until further notice. The parks will remain open on weekdays, but physical distancing must be adhered to and large group gatherings will continue to be prohibited.
- The Merced County Office of Emergency Services and Merced County Department of Public Health proclaimed a local and public health emergency March 13 in order to help address the outbreak. The Board of Supervisors ratified those actions during a March 16 special meeting.
- The Merced County Public Health Department Operations Center was activated Jan. 27, 2020 (403 days) in order to prepare for COVID-19 in and around our community. The Merced County Emergency Operations Center and Human Services Agency Department Operations Center are also currently active.

VACCINE INFORMATION:

- www.vaccinatemercedcounty.com
- www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirusstats

COVID-19 Vaccination Distribution: Phase 1 As of February 26, 2021

The supply of COVID-19 vaccine is limited, which means that the vaccine will be offered to different groups of people in different phases, starting with our healthcare workers. As more vaccines become available, it will be offered to everyone. Below is a list of groups that will be offered the vaccine in phases, according to their risk of exposure.

- Key:**
- Green circle indicates that the group has been offered the vaccine.
 - Yellow circle indicates that the group is waiting to be offered the vaccine.
 - Red circle indicates that the vaccine is not yet available at this time.

Phase 1A

Tier 1:	Tier 2:	Tier 3:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acute care, psychiatric and correctional facility hospitals ● Skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, and similar settings for older or medically vulnerable individuals ● Residents in long-term care settings ● Paramedics, EMTs, and others providing emergency medical services ● Dialysis centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intermediate care facilities for persons who need non-continuous nursing supervision and supportive care ● Home health care and in-home supportive services ● Public Health field staff ● Primary care clinics, including federally qualified health centers, rural health centers, correctional facility clinics, and urgent care clinics ● Community health workers, including promotoras 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Specialty clinics (i.e. optometry, cardiology, neurology, outpatient, surgery, physical therapy, etc.) ● Laboratory workers ● Dental and other oral health clinics ● Pharmacy staff not working in settings at higher tiers ● Veterinarians

Phase 1B

Tier 1:	Tier 2:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Persons 65 years and older ● Frontline Essential Workers Sectors: education, childcare, emergency services (such as law enforcement), and food and agriculture (see attached, Appendix A for details) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Frontline Essential Workers Sectors: transportation and logistics; industrial, commercial, residential, and sheltering facilities and services; critical manufacturing ● Congregate settings with outbreak risk Incarcerated Homeless

Phase 1C

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Persons 50-64 years old ● Persons 16-49 years old with high risk health conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Other essential workers Sectors: water and Wastewater, government operations, community-based essential functions, defense, energy, chemical/hazardous materials, finance services, and IT/communications
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- Other sectors not included may be added to a comparable phase.

These proposed allocations are based on recommendations by the CDC and ACIP

For more information, visit www.vaccinatemercedcounty.com



Appendix A: Phase 1B, Tier 1 - Frontline Essential Workers

The list below will provide further information about Frontline Essential Worker eligibility under Phase 1B of the vaccine distribution plan. To ensure that vulnerable groups continue to be prioritized, the vaccine will be allocated as 70% for individuals 65 years and older and 30% for essential workers.

Initial vaccine supplies will be only available to a limited group of essential workers and will expand as vaccine allocations increase in Merced County. At this time, the following sectors will be considered eligible to receive the vaccine as a Frontline Essential Worker:

● Eligible for Vaccination

- Education and childcare sectors.
- Emergency Services including law enforcement, paramedics, and first responders.
- Farmers, farm and ranch workers, and agribusiness support services.
- Veterinary health, animal diagnostic and food testing laboratories.
- Workers in food manufacture and maintenance of equipment associated with infrastructure necessary to food/ agricultural production and distribution.
- Food manufacturer and supplier workers (includes poultry and livestock).
- Workers at animal care facilities that provide food, shelter, veterinary/routine care.
- Workers in sanitation of food manufacturers.

● Soon-to-be Eligible for Vaccination

- Retail store workers (groceries/convenience stores, pharmacies).
- Restaurant workers (includes carry-out and quick serve food operations).
- Workers in sanitation of operations from wholesale to retail.
- Workers in growth/distribution of plants and associated products for home gardens.
- Workers in sawmills, fiber and forest manufactures/distributors.
- Workers in cafeterias used to feed workers, particularly worker populations sheltered against COVID-19.
- Government, private, and non-governmental organizations' workers essential for food assistance programs (including school lunch programs) and government payments.
- Workers at production, storage, transport, and distribution of chemicals and medicines.
- Transporters supporting animal agricultural industries.

Merced County COVID-19 Vaccination Distribution: Phase 1 - Appendix A
As of February 26, 2021

COVID-19 TESTING:

Testing Site	Location	Registration
Golden Valley Health Centers	645 Seventh St, Los Banos	1-866-682-4842 www.gvhc.org
Golden Valley Health Centers	857 W. Childs Ave., Merced	1-866-682-4842 www.gvhc.org
OptumServe Site: Merced	900 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr, Merced	1-888-634-1123 or online at www.lhi.care/covidtesting
CVS – Merced	1970 Yosemite Pkwy, Merced	https://bit.ly/3e9kaS4
CVS – Atwater	1651 Bellevue Rd, Atwater	https://bit.ly/3e9kaS4

CVS – Livingston	474 Winton Parkway, Livingston, CA 95334	209-394-6785 https://bit.ly/3e9kaS4
Fountain View Urgent Care	374 W. Olive Ave. # A, Merced	209-384-5766
Castle Family Health Urgent Care	3605 Hospital Rd, Atwater	209-381-2000
San Joaquin Drug	9215 E, CA-140, Planada	209-382-1291
OptumServe Site: Los Banos	Los Banos Fairgrounds: 403 F St., Los Banos	1-888-634-1123 or online at www.lhi.care/covidtesting

- Within the public health system, every person who has met CDC criteria for severe disease within Merced County has been tested.
- Public Health is actively identifying other methods to enhance testing capability for providers throughout the community and increase testing county-wide. We will continue to be notified should positive tests come through either system (public health or commercial).

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Coronavirus symptoms include: mild to severe respiratory illness, fever, cough, difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and loss of taste or smell. If symptoms develop, individuals should stay at home to limit exposure to others.
- Anyone who has had contact with a person with possible COVID-19 infection and has the above symptoms should call his/her local health department/health care provider immediately.
- Do not go to your provider's office without calling ahead. Do not call 911 for suspected COVID-19 unless you are having a medical emergency.
- During the flu season, there are steps you can take to protect your health and the health of those around you:
 - Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - Stay away from work, school or other people if you become sick with respiratory symptoms such as fever and cough.
 - Cover sneezes or coughs with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
 - Wear a face covering when in public.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- **Sign up for COVID-19 alerts:** www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus
- Merced County Public Health COVID-19 **Information Webpage:**
 - www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus
- Merced County Public Health **Information Line:**
 - 209-381-1180 (English, Spanish, and Hmong. Live reps. available 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)
- **Email** COVID-19-specific questions to Merced County Public Health:
 - COVID19@countyofmerced.com.

- Updated **CDC Information**:
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/whats-new-all.html>
- **CDC Resources for Households**:
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/index.html>
- How to **talk to your kids** about the coronavirus:
 - <https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-coronavirus>
- Guidance for **Businesses and Employers**:
 - <https://bit.ly/2IH2G2u>
 - www.covid19.ca.gov
- Report **Price Gouging**:
 - <http://www.countyofmerced.com/3381/Price-Gouging>
- Report **Consumer Fraud**:
 - www.countyofmerced.com/2322/Consumer-Fraud
- Report **business activities and large group gatherings** that violate the Stay Safe to Stay Open Health Order:
 - Information Line: 209-381-1180 (8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday – Friday)
 - Email: COVID19@countyofmerced.com
- **Free Virtual Care** options through Dignity Health for those with COVID-19 symptoms:
 - Patients can receive a free Virtual Care Anywhere visit if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Symptoms can include fever, cough, or shortness of breath.
 - To access a free virtual urgent care visit, visit www.dignityhealth.org/virtualcareanywhere, download the Virtual Care Anywhere app in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store, or call 855-356-8053 and use the coupon code COVID19.
- **Get Help/Give Help**:
 - www.gethelpgivehelpmerced.com
- **Donations**—help community members impacted by COVID-19:
 - www.countyofmerced.com/donations
- Exclusive **Shopping for Vulnerable Populations**:
 - www.countyofmerced.com/3396/Exclusive-Shopping-for-Vulnerable-Popula
- Apply for **benefits**— Individuals experiencing financial hardship may qualify for cash assistance through CalWORKs, food nutrition assistance through CalFresh, and medical assistance through MediCal:
 - www.getcalfresh.org (CalFresh only)
 - www.C4yourself.com (CalWORKs and MediCal)
 - 1-855-421-6770
- **Unemployment Insurance** questions to local Merced County EDD Office:
 - WSBModestoFieldOffice@edd.ca.gov
- Information regarding **tenant protections**:
 - www.countyofmerced.com/3412/Real-Estate
- 24/7 **Warm Line for Youth** (emotional support):
 - 209-381-6800 or 1-888-334-0163 (toll free)
 - Additional Behavioral Health resources: www.countyofmerced.com/3395/Behavioral-Health-Resources
- **Reopen Merced County**:
 - www.reopenmercedcounty.com