

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION
February 10, 2022**

COMMISSIONERS

Alina Dorian, Ph.D., **Chairperson** *
Diego Rodrigues, LMFT, MA, **Vice-Chair** *
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Kelly Colopy, M.P.P*

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION ADVISORS

Christina Vane-Perez, Chief of Staff *
Dawna Treece, PH Commission Liaison*
***Present **Excused ***Absent**

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH REPRESENTATIVES

Dr. Barbara Ferrer, Director of Public Health *
Dr. Muntu Davis, Health Officer **

TOPIC	DISCUSSION/FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATION/ACTION/FOLLOW-UP
<u>I. Call to Order</u>	<i>The meeting was called to order remotely at 10:37 a.m. by Chair Dorian</i>	<i>Information only.</i>
<u>II. Announcements and Introductions</u>	The Commissioners and DPH staff introduced themselves. January minutes	<i>Information only.</i> <i>Moved to next month</i>
<u>III. Public Health Report</u>	Dr. Barbara Ferrer, Director, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health The Board and Public Health are currently discussing post-surge planning and strategies that continue our commitment to equity. The case and hospitalization numbers are down and many safety protections that are in place will be removed. Public Health celebrates Black History month and recognizes the differences in health outcomes due to the lack of investments in many of our communities because it is rooted in racism, marginalization, and discrimination. We are proud of the Black leadership, historical and current, and the path forward for advocating and putting in place policies, practices, and system that support racial justice.	

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Public Health will be celebrating Public Health Week in April. The theme is Public Health is Where You Are”.

There is a decline in cases numbers, which means we are coming out of the surge. Cases are about 5,100, although this is high, during the surge cases were about 40,000 a day. Hospitalization dropped below 2,500. Test positivity rate dropped to 5%. Post-surge doesn't mean the pandemic is over but is an acknowledgement that there is a stable decline and we can reassess mitigation strategies to better align.

Fully vaccinated Black and Latinx residents in LAC are between 1.5 and 3 times more likely to get infected, hospitalized, and end up dying when compared with White and Asian residents. Public Health will continue to add layers of protection for everyone until transmission is low.

The numbers have dropped consecutively 7 days in a row. This will allow for less restrictions such as removing the masking protections that are required in outdoor spaces, at outdoor mega events, and in outdoor spaces at childcare and K-12 schools.

Although, there are some lifting across the state, LAC masking will be required post-surge at all indoor establishments. This will be maintained until there have been two consecutive weeks at or below moderate transmission as defined by the CDC or vaccines have been available for children under 5 for eight weeks and no emerging reports of significantly circulating new variants of concern that threaten vaccine effectiveness.

Masks are also required indoors at TK-12 schools, childcare, youth settings, healthcare settings; correctional facilities; homeless and emergency shelters and cooling centers as required by State regulations. They are also needed when riding public transit and at transportation hubs as required by federal regulations. The federal government has kept this regulation in place at least until mid-

March.. Employers must provide high quality and well-fitting masks to workers in close contact with others. Once LAC is at moderate transmission, masking is optional for employers.

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	<p>Vaccination verification will continue at the following high-risk venues until LAC reaches low transmission for two consecutive weeks: outdoor mega events and at bars, lounges, nightclubs, wineries, breweries, and distilleries. Those facilities will continue with vaccination verification requirements. At mega events, people will need to either verify full vaccinated or show proof of a negative test (within 48 hours).</p> <p>Public Health will try to stamp all testing kits boxes that are distributed with the call center number. Consumers can contact someone to go over next steps if the result is positive and what is needed to protect the individual and their loved ones. Public Health still maintains quarantine and isolation facilities where people can get housed if they are unable to do that safely.</p> <p>LAC is looking forward to improved access and distribution of therapeutics such as Paxlovid, which has shown to be a remarkable oral medication that can be prescribed to people who tested positive, and who have mild or no symptoms. Unfortunately, there are 10 million people in LAC but only 3,000 courses currently received biweekly. The meds are distributed to those at high risk of having severe illness because of low supply. Additionally, the efforts to ensure that those with less access to health care can receive appropriate therapeutics includes expanding the network of providers with information, supply of therapeutics and prescribing ability, expansion of distribution sites that can distribute the oral meds, establish a call center so residents can get more information and access to therapeutics, and consider telehealth platforms at public health clinics/community sites to improve access.</p> <p>Public Health post surge priorities include to protect the medically vulnerable, especially those residing at skilled nursing facilities and PEH, protect essential workers, protect hospitals and health system function, and support a subset of vital institutions.</p> <p>http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/index.htm</p>	
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IV. Presentation:

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Andrea Kim, PhD, MPH and Veronica Lee, PhD, MPH are part of the Exposure Management Unit and provided an overview of the exposure management and Covid-19 testing in TK-12 Schools. The Education sector is comprised of four teams that provide support to the COVID-19 response in schools from prevention to mitigation.

The vaccine team supports schools with hosting mobile clinics and provides access to high quality information that schools can use to disseminate to parents, families, and their school communities. The prevention team provides technical assistance on prevention and mitigation via site visits and develops communication materials that schools use. The outbreak management team conducts the field response and provides assistance to schools when they are managing an outbreak response and they coordinate with other teams.

The exposure management unit covers the Early Child Care education, TK-12, and institutes of higher education in the education sector. The team provides technical assistance to sites with implementing their isolation and quarantine protocols and determining on-campus transmission. When sites have three or more epidemiologically linked cases within a span of 14 days, that opens the site up for an outbreak response. This team conducts surveillance and produces data reports and dashboards information. The team also provide technical assistance to schools on implementing school-based testing programs in TK-12.

Public Health received a \$302 million grant to support COVID-19 testing in schools across the county as part of the multi-layered prevention strategy to keep schools safe. This was through CDC's Epidemiology and Lab Capacity Reopening Schools Award. The grant will last from June 2021 to July 2022. There are approximately 77 districts participating, 214 charter schools and 170 private schools. There is a rolling enrollment for testing support when needed.

Schools have conducted about 12.8 million tests since the start of the school year. During the surge, schools increased their testing programs and were administering 500,000 to 600,000 tests per week.

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It has been a huge undertaking and challenge to launch a testing program for schools. COVID-19 Test Program has been a critical part of a multi-layered strategy schools have utilized to keep school safe and support in-person instruction. Schools can identify students and staff who have COVID either through screening testing, which is for asymptomatic individuals, or response testing for those individuals with symptoms, or who may have had an exposure to someone with COVID. With the Exposure unit's guidance, adjustments to isolation and quarantine and testing, students were able to return from isolation if they had COVID on day six if they are not experiencing symptoms. Schools can monitor COVID related activities in their school communities and track students and staff that have tested positive in the past week. Testing support so that schools can adopt strategies to support in-person instruction has been successful.

Public Health understands there is disproportionate access to certain testing resources for certain marginalized communities. Testing programs have helped with increasing access to COVID-19 testing for all school communities. So, having schools provide this support has been a huge help in making sure that we increase access to testing.

Although there have been a lot of success with the program, there are still some challenges. Schools are exhausted, which is one of many challenges we see. Not only has the testing program been a learning curve for schools in terms of operation, but dealing with COVID-19 overall has been draining. Data management is another challenge. Staff need to figure out who needs a test and when, get the result, and then communicate that information back, to then to continue inform parents and families on COVID, and managing all of the information.

To help curve the transmission trend in schools vaccinations are key. This is the best tool to prevent infection and severe disease in our communities. As of February 3rd, 33% of children 5 to 11 years old had received on dose of vaccine, 24% were fully vaccinated. In contrast, 12-17 years old children are doing better with 84% that were vaccinated with one dose and 75% fully vaccinated. LAC will continue to partner with schools and pediatricians to increase coverage and access.

Public Health has been scheduling school and mobile school vaccine clinics onsite in the hardest hit neighborhoods in the county based on community health metrics. DPH has

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	<p>over 1,000 mobile vaccine clinics, 250 clinics scheduled and held over 5,600 clinics in 750 schools.</p> <p>Policy changes were made to help bring school children back into school safely. Students may test to stay in Tk-12 schools. This was a strategy adopted by some schools. This enabled unvaccinated students that had an exposure at school to not have to quarantine away from school. It allowed them to come back to school if they had a mask on and didn't have any symptoms. And as long as they were in school to test twice weekly, to mask and remain without symptoms. Out of 78 districts, only half adopted this new strategy and we found that our COVID case rate in schools that adopted test to stay did not increase after they had adopted the test to stay. There was no evidence of onward transmission from those contacts to other contacts to their contacts. Schools that participated saved 92,000 in-person school days in a period of six weeks.</p> <p>During the surge, it was almost impossible for schools to conduct individual contact tracing. The state came up with a strategy called Group tracing, which is a classroom that had an infected person in the room would be allowed to just be notified that there was an exposure in that classroom regardless of vaccination status, you can stay in school. The only requirement was that anyone that was unvaccinated needed to get tested weekly. This was adopted by 60% of the school districts.</p> <p>Lastly, more than likely outdoor masking will not be required at TK-12 schools. Priority groups for testing remain to be the unvaccinated or exposed person and schools that have limited testing capacity. Public Health will continue to work with families, pediatricians, and schools to increase vaccine coverage.</p>	
<p><u>V.</u> <u>New Business</u></p>		

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<p><u>VI.</u> <u>Unfinished Business</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022 Annual Report 	<p><i>Dawna will submit Draft to Commissioners for review/edit</i></p> <p><i>Due March 31, 2022</i></p>
<p><u>VII.</u> <u>Public Comment</u></p>		
<p><u>VIII.</u> <u>Adjournment</u></p>	<p><i>MOTION: ADJOURN THE MEETING</i></p> <p><i>The PHC meeting adjourned at approximately 11:57 a.m.</i></p>	<p><i>Commission Dorian called a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and was seconded by Commissioner Crawford. All in favor.</i></p>