

From the Desk of Supervisor Lynn Compton

COVID-19 UPDATE – JULY 29TH, 2020



Today's positive COVID -19 count is only up by 21 new cases. Our hospitalizations remain relatively flat hovering between 10-15, on any given day. We have no answer to why our numbers don't correlate to hospitalization numbers.

Thus far, there have been 1710 COVID-19 positive cases in SLO County. The good news is that within the last 24 hours we've seen the lowest increases (as mentioned earlier...21 cases since yesterday). So far, 1304 individuals having met recovery definition, which is 76% of all cases, currently with less than 400 individuals recovering at home (that number is falling too). For the first time we fell below 400 (actually there are 381 active cases recovering at home). These numbers give us a window perspective, into how many cases are within our community (theoretically those active cases should be at home recuperating). We continue to see relatively low numbers of positives, compared to other counties in CA. Currently there are 13 individuals in our hospitals, with 4 of those in the ICU.

The SLO County death numbers have increase slightly, but we are in considerably better shape in our community, than in comparable communities. We experienced 4 more deaths this week, and thus far 12 individuals have now passed away due to COVID-19. All of these individuals were in 70's or 80's and had significant underlying medical conditions. Most of these individuals passed away in residential care facilities, where they hadn't been outside of that particular facility since we started seeing the virus in our county. Thus we know these individuals received their source of infection from staff or from those visiting facilities. This population is a very vulnerable population. We certainly don't want to blame facility, staff, etc...as they are working very diligently to contain outbreaks at these, and other similar facilities. The last three deaths occurred in one of our skilled nursing facilities within the county, and we are seeing a small upticks in cases in that same facility. We are working with all the managed care facilities and with those who oversees all skilled nursing facilities. Unfortunately, we will likely still seeing cases that result in deaths at these facilities with the outbreaks, as there are still a few fairly sick people with DNR orders on file, so unfortunately there might be more fallout to come in the next week or so.

It is a small deaths of deaths, but these deaths are occurring in people who have not left their homes for weeks /months, and are located in congregate care facilities, so that means the virus was brought into the facility, to them. So, we need to understand that younger individuals, who might easily recover from the virus, are the source for more vulnerable members of the community, so we must continue to try to keep our case counts down so there are less sources to be exposed to these vulnerable individuals.

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Testing – The turn-around time for testing results from our local testing labs has decreased, and we are now seeing a 4-5 day turn around time...this is likely due to the fact that we are still asking asymptomatic individuals who haven't been around a known positive case, not to get tested right now.

We still recommend exercising outdoors, recreating, go to beach, etc. If doing so, please stay within your family unit, keep apart from other units, physical distance, wear mask if going inside a business, etc. All the same things we have been preaching all along.

The main issue that Public Health Department has been working on – they rolled out today – and that is a pathway for schools, districts, private schools, etc. to request a waiver for in-person elementary school attendance. This waiver is only for elementary schools, per the state criteria.

At today's press briefing the Public Health Department indicated that they would be posting all the necessary documents on line for this waiver process (forms and process, instruction, frequently asked questions documents, etc). There have been a number of schools in the public and private sector that have requested such a waiver.

Many schools had already submitted their reopening plans before the state order came down, saying they can't open. With this new waiver process there is the potential option for in-person instruction for elementary schools, however, they will have to refine those plans as changes were made to the guidance (ex. mask wearing required for 3rd grade and up), and demonstrate how they will keep smaller groups of students together.

This disease/virus doesn't occur in our younger population as often, nor is it transmitted as easily from this population of younger students to adults. School districts might consider middle schools for additional space for these elementary students, as middle school students are not allowed to open under any conditions, according to the state...this move into the middle schools could possibly accommodate further distancing for those elementary schools who wish to open.

The process for schools and school districts to move forward, is again, to ask for a waiver. These schools can only open for in-person instruction if all required components are in place. There must be collaboration and consultation with parent groups, labor and community groups, etc.

Such schools must implement the school guidance in all of the parameters, and need write a school plans to demonstrate they have attended to all requirements (ex. mask wearing from 3rd grade up, staff/family education, distancing, health screening, training, etc. and other state guidance). They must also designate a "point of contact," between the Public Health department and that individual school. That person will be our "go-to" person if there are some cases that break within a school setting. We

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want a rapid communication channel within any school to address any such outbreak within school setting, be it with a student or staff. Time is short before schools are to make such a decision, and there is a known period of uncertainty. At this point most schools have decided to do distance learning, but for those elementary schools that want to do in-person learning, we will try to turn their application around in within a 1 week time frame. Please submit your plans early, so we can turn around these applications. The public can view all this information, the application forms, and frequently asked questions on website at readyslo.org.

Child Care – This is an allowed “essential activity” according to the state. Such facilities have been allowed to operate all during this outbreak. We have worked with our local child care providers to have all the protective measures implemented. Our licensed child care facilities are allowed to be open as an “essential activity” and that group includes those that are done in homes. There has been much dialogue as to how to do such activities with these individuals, and how to do so correctly under the state guidance. We are trying to support this strained industry. There are many issues, including those at facilities that accommodate children of varying ages, etc. We want to give rational support to licensed facilities, and are aware that new “pop-up” facilities will be opening, since there is the absence of schooling, and we are open to dealing with creative ideas on how to deal with those new facilities. We have received plans from individuals and are working with them (families, school coops, etc.) on ways to move forward. Visit readyslo.org for guidelines and for the state childcare guidance that provides the list of best practices.

As always, if there is anything we can do to help, or answer any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact my office at: district4@co.slo.ca.us.

Respectfully,

Lynn Compton