PRESS RELEASE
December 30, 2020

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY EXPERIENCES CONTINUED SURGE IN COVID-19 CASES AS MORE VACCINE ARRIVES FOR PHASE 1A GROUPS

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) – The data could not be clearer. Simply stated, COVID-19 in Santa Barbara County is at record high levels. The case rate, number of new daily cases, testing positivity, active cases, and hospitalizations are all the highest we have ever experienced during the course of this pandemic. Further, the rate of increase of these metrics is approaching exponential growth.

As of yesterday afternoon, December 29, 2020, the unadjusted case rate remains high at approximately 43.3 per 100,000. Testing positivity is currently 10.5%. Recently, active community cases have been over 1,200, which is over twice as high as our summer peak. Since December 17, 2020 our COVID-19 hospitalizations reached new highs.

“What this means is that COVID-19 is actively spreading across our county. It is not safe to gather with people outside your household,” shared Van Do-Reynoso, Director for the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department. “Not only is gathering unsafe, but we risk losing the extremely limited hospital beds we have left and exhausting the health care staff that has tirelessly cared for our community.”

This week, more COVID-19 vaccines arrived. To date 17,575 vaccines have been delivered to hospitals, health care centers and the Public Health Department in Santa Barbara County. 8,775 Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines and 8,800 Moderna vaccines have been received.

“As we move further into COVID-19 vaccine distribution, we come closer and closer to being out of this pandemic. Our most at-risk health care givers will soon be protected from this virus. This fact alone puts our entire community in a better place than it is now,” said Dr. Henning Ansorg, Health Officer for Santa Barbara County. “We are in for a very difficult next few weeks. Unfortunately, we cannot stop what is to come in the immediate future, but we can impact the longer-term trajectory of this virus spread. Stay home, wear a mask if you must leave for essential tasks, isolate immediately if you are sick, and please do not gather with those outside your home.”

For more information about COVID-19 vaccination, updated on a regular basis, please visit https://publichealthsbc.org/covid-19-vaccine-information/.

Stay Connected:
County Public Health: www.PublicHealthSBC.org, Twitter and Facebook
County of Santa Barbara: www.CountyofSB.org, Twitter, Facebook
2-1-1 Call Center: Dial 211 or outside the area, call (800) 400-1572
Community Wellness Team Information and Referral Line: (805) 364-2750
Behavioral Wellness Crisis Line: (888) 868-1649