



Public Health Division

County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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TWO YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASE

Santa Cruz County, Calif. – March 6th marked the two-year anniversary of the first confirmed COVID-19 case in Santa Cruz County. Public Health Officials reflect on the response to the pandemic.

Including the first local COVID-19 case – a passenger from the Grand Princess cruise ship – more than 46,000 cases have been officially recorded, and estimates of actual cases are four times higher, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. So far, 255 County residents have perished at least partly due to COVID-19.

“These past two years have been difficult for all of us, especially the families and loved ones of those we have lost,” said Dr. Gail Newel, Santa Cruz County Health Officer. “I want to thank everyone who made sacrifices – everyone who wore a mask to protect themselves and others, employees and employers who kept everyone as safe as possible, parents and students who navigated distance learning – to get us through these last two years.”

With help of community partners, the County has accomplished the following:

- 335,958 PCR tests conducted and more than 122,890 antigen tests distributed
- 535,746 doses of vaccine have been given
- 998,295 masks have been distributed
- 61 pop-up vaccination clinics
- More than 30,000 calls answered by County’s COVID-19 Call Center
- 668 vaccinations given to homebound individuals

The federal government recently announced a shift in strategy to include a “test to treat” approach making on-demand antiviral treatment available to anyone who tests positive for COVID-19. Knowing that COVID-19 will remain with us for the foreseeable future, this marks a

new phase of the pandemic where personal and community responsibility move to the forefront while local public health departments begin to step back from day-to-day pandemic oversight and the health care system takes on most responsibilities, much as it does with other endemic viruses.

All these efforts began with the framework to SAVE Lives.

Slow the Spread

Adapt and Adjust

Vaccinate and Treat

Elevate Readiness for the next public health emergency

Vaccines, masks, tests, quarantining, improved ventilation and therapeutics save lives. Every community member can choose to do their part to reduce spread, minimize infection and keep the community and our most vulnerable population safe. Santa Cruz County Public Health is immensely grateful for the community's support over the last two years, not just toward county staff but to other community members.

For local information go to www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus or call (831) 454-4242 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.