

The rate of positive COVID cases is increasing significantly across the country, in California, and in Santa Barbara County. When there are more positive COVID cases in the community, there is a higher risk of becoming infected with the virus for each of us who live in the community. Governor Newsom spoke about the increases yesterday, concerns about the capacity of hospitals and ICU's in the state, and he indicated he is considering further restrictions in California.

It is likely that the Governor and the California Department of Public Health will watch the data closely to see impacts on COVID cases and hospitalizations following the Thanksgiving holiday weekend with travel and gatherings. We know that it usually takes a couple of weeks after exposure to the COVID virus before we see increases in hospitalizations. Actions need to be taken before hospital capacity is reached to prevent overwhelming our healthcare system, our ability to provide quality care, and our ability to protect residents.

Decisions may be made to have further restrictions and it is possible that rules and recommendations that have guided our response to COVID may change as the situation in the community changes. We do not yet know what those changes will be or if any of those changes will impact local schools. We do know it is best for each of us to take the steps know that prevent the spread including wearing face coverings, maintaining physical distance, and avoiding gatherings. As we enter the winter holiday season with increasing COVID rates in our community, we depend on all of us following good practices to stay healthy.

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