

# Talking points regarding Sonoma County entering the orange tier

Tuesday, April 6, 2021

## FACTS:

- On Tuesday, April 6, the state announced that it reached the Governor's goal of administering 4 million COVID-19 vaccine doses in the 400 ZIP codes that have been hardest hit by the pandemic.
- As part of this health equity milestone, the state has announced the minimum case rate for the transition to the orange tier ("moderate risk") has changed from 4 to 6 cases per 100,000 for those counties still in the red tier ("substantial risk").
- The new guidelines will qualify Sonoma County to move to the orange tier beginning at 12:01 a.m. on Wednesday, April 7.
- As of this week, our adjusted new case rate is 4.3 per 100,000 residents, overall test positivity is 1.6 percent, and health equity test positivity is 2.3 percent.
- Sonoma County now easily meets the adjusted orange tier criteria for all three metrics -- fewer than 6.0 new cases per 100,000, overall test positivity of below 4.9 percent and below the health equity test positivity metric of 5.3 percent.
- Counties are allowed to move into the next tier if they maintain the appropriate metrics for two weeks. The state is giving Sonoma County credit for meeting the metrics for the past two weeks.
- The state on March 25 announced that anyone 50 years and older is eligible to be vaccinated starting April 1. And anyone 16 and older will be eligible on April 15. That means everyone except children under the age of 16 will be eligible to be vaccinated in California.
- California is also now allowing health care providers to use their discretion to vaccinate family members of eligible people, even if the family members are not otherwise eligible.
- Governor Newsom said those eligibility changes were possible because of the increasing supply of vaccine doses from the federal government.

## KEY DISCUSSION POINTS:

- Just a month ago, Sonoma County had an average of nearly 14 new cases per 100,000. This has dropped to an adjusted rate of 4 per 100,000.
- The move to the orange tier will shift Sonoma County's risk level from "substantial" to "moderate," meaning our community is still at risk of COVID-19 transmission, just at a much lower rate. With the possible spread of variants and the large number of vaccines that still need to be administered, we remind

everyone to continue to do their part — masking, practicing social distancing, and getting tested — to keep improving the County’s metrics so we can move into the even less restrictive yellow tier.

- The County’s move to the orange tier is a significant step. The orange tier allows the following:
  - **Restaurants**, including wineries, breweries, and distilleries that serve meals, will be allowed to expand indoors to 50% capacity or 200 people, whichever is fewer.
  - **Breweries, wineries and distilleries** that do not serve meals can now open indoors with modifications: 25% capacity indoors, or 100 people, whichever is fewer.
  - **Bars** that do not serve meals can open outdoors with modifications.
  - **Retail** establishments will be allowed to increase indoor capacity to 100%.
  - **Places of worship** can expand to 50% capacity indoors or 200 people, whichever is fewer.
  - **Movie theaters** can expand to 50% capacity indoors or 200 people, whichever is fewer.
  - **Gyms and fitness centers** (including yoga and dance studios) can expand indoors to 25% capacity; climbing walls and indoor pools are now allowed.
  - **Museums, zoos, and aquariums** can expand indoor activities to 50% capacity.
  - **Family entertainment centers**, including bowling alleys, can open indoors for naturally distanced activities with modifications at 25% capacity.
  - **Cardrooms** and satellite wagering can open indoors with modifications at 25% capacity.
  - **Shopping centers, including malls** and swap meets, can operate at full capacity with modifications, including closed common areas and reduced capacity food courts (restaurant rules apply)
  - **Outdoor live events** (sports and live performances) can have live audiences with assigned seats and controlled mixing at 33 percent capacity. Here’s the [state guidance](#).
  - **Commencements/graduations** can be held using the outdoor live event guidance --with assigned seats and controlled mixing and 33 percent capacity in the orange tier. Here’s the [state guidance](#).
  - **Non-essential offices** can open indoors with modifications. Telework is still strongly encouraged.

- **Indoor gatherings** are still strongly discouraged, with a maximum of three households.
- The state rules for schools do not change in the orange tier. The red tier allowed all schools in the County in all grades (TK-12th) to reopen after they have posted their COVID-19 Safety Plan (CSP) to their website homepage for at least five days prior to starting in-person instruction. Schools must adhere to the California Department of Public Health's [COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Instruction Framework](#).
- In addition, following the new Centers for Disease Control guidelines about social distancing, the California Department of Public Health issued updated guidance for schools on March 20. Schools are now allowed to set up classrooms with a minimum of three feet of distance, rather than six, between student chairs. This is intended to provide schools and districts greater flexibility and options for bringing students back to in-person instruction.
- Testing remains crucial in light of the surges in cases, often driven by variants, in other parts of the country.
- Residents' choices on protective measures, especially wearing facemasks and continuing to avoid indoor gatherings with non-household members, will play a major role in Sonoma County's ability to remain in the orange tier and move into the less restrictive yellow tier.
- An equitable vaccine strategy combined with the simple mitigation measures that we know reduce the spread -- wearing face coverings, washing hands, practicing social distancing and getting tested -- are needed as we continue to reopen our schools and businesses.
- Yellow tier: To move into the less restrictive yellow tier, all three key metrics need to be below 2 in Sonoma County for two weeks -- adjusted new cases need to be under 2 per 100,000 population; and overall test positivity and equity test positivity both need to be under 2 percent. We are close on both positivity metrics.