



RANCHO RESPONSE TO INCREASING COVID RATES JUNE 2022

With the recent increases in SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) cases in California and the U.S., the Rural Association of Northern California Health Officers (RANCHO) is providing information about current concerns and recommendations. RANCHO counties are unique, apart from other rural areas in California, primarily due to our remote nature and mountainous terrain. As such, it is important that we take proactive measures to ensure our populations have the information they need to protect themselves, their loved ones, and their communities. COVID-19 cases are beginning to increase in and around our Region. Concerns surrounding this recent increase in cases include:

- Potential surge in hospitalized patients
- Impact on schools and the ability of our students to continue learning in the classroom, which has proven to be essential to their well-being
- Impact on businesses
- Impact on high risk congregate settings such as skilled nursing facilities and jails

COVID-19 projections indicate that CA will continue to see increasing cases with the majority of counties peaking in mid-July. Northern California counties generally lag behind the rest of CA for increased cases. This swell of infections is largely due to the highly transmissible BA.2.12.1 Omicron variant, which is already being displaced by the new and even more transmissible BA.4 and BA.5 subvariants.

COVID-19 variants present unique challenges. The emerging variants are proving to be highly infectious and able to infect vaccinated persons in larger numbers than previous variants. That said, we also know that unvaccinated persons are 6 times more likely of being infected with COVID-19 and 9 times more likely to be hospitalized than vaccinated persons. Unvaccinated persons are also 11 times more likely of dying from COVID-19 complications than vaccinated persons. Although there is some immunity provided after infection, it is not sufficient to prevent spread or variant progression. What is clearly demonstrated by the science is that persons who become infected and are vaccinated or receive vaccination after infection are best protected to ward off immediate and long lasting COVID-19 complications, including severe illness, long COVID, hospitalization, and death.

During this wave of increased COVID-19 cases, your northern California Health Officers recommend:

- **Get Vaccinated** and Boosted if you are eligible. Infants 6 months or older and toddlers are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.
- **Test** before going to an indoors event or party or travelling on public transportation. If you have symptoms or test positive, stay home. Call your provider for effective treatments if you test positive for COVID-19.
- **Gather** outdoors to make it harder for COVID-19 to spread to others.
- **Mask** indoors in public places. Open windows to improve ventilation and upgrade HVAC filters to Merv 13 or the highest possible.

Follow CDPH guidance <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Order-of-the-State-Public-Health-Officer-Beyond-Blueprint.aspx>