Stay Safe as You Celebrate Winter Holidays

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Dear Friends,

Last week, the County was placed in the purple tier on the State's Blueprint for a Safer Economy, and I thank all of you for stepping up to follow the safety measures to keep yourselves, your families and your communities healthy.

We face a holiday season like no other in our lifetimes. The winter holidays in District 3 reflect our diversity with celebrations for Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Las Posadas, New Year and Lunar New Year. We can still celebrate these important occasions, just on a smaller scale.

The Public Health Department’s requests of you are to avoid traveling; celebrate within your own households; take your gathering, if possible, outside (no rain in the forecast) for maximum ventilation; and follow the basics – wear masks, keep physical distances from those outside your household and wash your hands frequently. Click on joint recommendations for more details. The State has also issued a statewide travel advisory.

I know many of us are developing pandemic fatigue, but we need to dig a little deeper into our reservoirs of patience so we can get through this third surge of high transmissions, just as we got through the surges in the spring and summer.

For most of us, technology will help us connect to those we love through Zoom, Facetime and other social media. There is also nothing wrong with sending a card through the mail or making a phone call to check in on someone who lives alone.

We flattened the curve before, and we can do it again. The faster we can get this pandemic under control, the better for the health of our economy and our health system. We can also keep the spirit of these holidays in our hearts and look forward to a time when we can gather, hug each other and spend the days with each other in person.

FYI, in observance of Thanksgiving, most County offices will be closed on Thursday and Friday this week.

COVID-19 Dashboards Update

According to County Public Health Dashboards, as of Sunday, November 22, there were 30,676 reported COVID-19 cases in Santa Clara County, an increase of 2,369 cases since Monday, November 16. These are cumulative numbers and don’t reflect the number of
people who have recovered or those who may have COVID-19 but have not been tested; 463 people have died, an increase of 19 since Monday, November 16, and 192 people are now in hospitals, an increase of 57 since November 16; 1,266,281 people have been tested, with a seven-day average positivity rate of 3.3%, up from 2.6% on November 16.

The cumulative total of cases in California is 1.1 million and 18,726 people have died; 22.4 million have been tested, with an average 14-day positivity rate of 5.5%.

In the U.S., there were 12.3 million cases and 260,401 deaths.

Globally, there are 58.7 million cases and 1,388,926 deaths.

Limited Stay at Home Order After 10 p.m.

The County is under a limited State curfew, which means that non-essential businesses must close between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. each day, including restaurants. Take-out and delivery services can continue after 10 p.m. You can also go to grocery stores late at night, go to and from your jobs, walk your dogs and leave your home with your families.

Impact on K-12 Schools in the Purple Tier

School campuses that have already opened for in-person instruction (either fully or partially as part of a phased reopening) can stay open. Schools who are in the process of implementing a phased reopening can continue that phased plan while Santa Clara County remains in the Purple Tier. However, school sites that have not already opened for in-person instruction must remain closed until Santa Clara County has been back in the Red Tier for at least 14 days. Schools may still apply for waivers to offer in-person instruction to students in grades K-6. For more information, see the County’s updated Mandatory Directive for Schools.

California Launches New Loan Program for Small Businesses

The State has announced the opening of the California Rebuilding Fund, a loan program to help small businesses rebuild from the current economic crisis. The program is accepting applications now. Loans of up to $100,000 are available, and early applications are encouraged. Interested small business owners can apply for a loan at www.CALoanFund.org. To qualify, businesses must have 50 or fewer full-time employees, annual revenues of $2.5 million or below in 2019, and revenues must have declined since January 2020. The City of San José will host a webinar at 3 p.m. on December 1 for San José businesses to provide more information about this program.

Help for First-Time Homebuyers

Empower Homebuyers SCC is the County of Santa Clara’s first-time homebuyer down payment assistance program. Funded through the 2016 Measure A Affordable Housing Bond and administered by Housing Trust Silicon Valley, the program provides down payment assistance loans to first-time homebuyers with up to 17% of the purchase price on a market rate home. The program is available for households who have low to moderate incomes. Find out more at Empower Homebuyers SCC Webinar from 2 to 3 p.m. on Thursday, December 3, hosted by the City of Milpitas. Click here to register. You can also call 408-703-3837 ext. 301 or email empowerhomebuyersscc@housingtrustsv.org.

County Testing Locations – Holiday Schedule for the Coming Week

The community testing program operated by Santa Clara Valley Medical Center continues to offer drop-in and appointment-based COVID-19 testing at several locations across the county. However, the Public Health Department is cautioning that testing negative should not be considered a means to clear you for unsafe activities, such as holiday group gatherings or travel. The test provides point-in-time results.

All County sites will be on a holiday schedule this week.Appointment based testing at the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds will be closed on Thanksgiving, but will offer special
Sunday testing on November 29. Residents can book an appointment for the Fairgrounds or various rotating city sites in Vietnamese, Chinese, Spanish, or English.

Drop-in testing sites at Emmanuel Baptist Church and the South County Annex in Gilroy will be closed on Thanksgiving and the Friday after, but will offer special Monday hours earlier in the week. In addition to our usual drop-in locations, this week the County will also be conducting testing at 1775 Story Road in San Jose on Wednesday. Visit www.sccfreetest.org for a full schedule.

As always, you can reach my office at 408-299-5030, email me at dave.cortese@bos.sccgov.org or visit the District 3 webpage at supervisorcortese.org.

Stay safe,

Dave Cortese
County Supervisor, Third District

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