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COVID-19 Update: Things are Moving Quickly

Availability of Testing Increasing January 8, Vaccine Distribution Progressing

Lake County, CA – COVID-19 cases continue to rise in Lake County. The hospitals are full, but fortunately, not yet overwhelmed. With the Christmas Holidays behind us, and with New Year’s already here, now is the riskiest time for transmission; people are indoors, and many are gathering more than is advised. The more precautions we take over the coming days, the less impact we will see in the next few weeks.

Testing Update: OptumServe Coming January 8, Drive-Thru Testing by Verily Available January 4-7

To get tested January 4-7, register at <https://www.projectbaseline.com/study/covid-19/> or call the MHOAC, 707-263-8174:

- **In Clearlake:** Monday, January 4, and Tuesday, January 5, from 9-12
- **In Lakeport:** Wednesday, January 6, and Thursday, January 7, from 9-12

Beginning Friday, January 8, OptumServe’s new indoor testing sites will open:

- **In Lakeport:** Silveira Community Center (500 N. Main St) - Mondays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 7am-7pm
- **In Lower Lake:** Lower Lake Town Hall (16195 Main St) Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, 7am-7pm

Both OptumServe sites will test children. Any insurance is accepted; if you have no insurance, there is no cost. You can make an appointment at <https://lhi.care/covidtesting>, or by calling 888-634-1123. Walk-ins are also welcome.

Additionally, Rite Aid in Clearlake is providing Drive-Thru testing, with appointments made through Project Baseline.

“Phase 1a” of Vaccine Distribution is Well Underway

The Health Department has received about 1,300 doses of vaccine so far, and we are getting it out as fast as we can. Here is an outline the current plans for the residents of Lake County. We are following California Community Vaccine Advisory Committee priorities, and “Phase 1a” includes the following groups:

- Health care providers are the majority of the first group, so that we can keep the hospital staff, nursing home staff, and medical first responders healthy and able to work during the surge that we are in.
 - We have vaccinated 600+ people in this group so far.
 - Both hospitals, EMS, and all three nursing homes have immunized most staff interested in getting the shot.
 - Second doses will be due in a few weeks.
- IHSS workers serving multiple homes; Public Health field staff, Primary Care clinics, Jail Medical staff, some of the congregate living facilities—some in these groups have started getting immunized, and plans to expand to cover all who are interested should launch next week.
- Other medical facilities: like specialty clinics, laboratory workers, dental clinics, and pharmacy staff will be contacted in the next few weeks with plans, depending on how much vaccine we are able to obtain.

“Phase 1b” Guidelines Expected Soon

“Phase 1b” will include: essential workers (teachers, law enforcement, farmworkers, food service, public transit, etc.); people older than 74; and those with chronic illnesses. Guidelines on how to prioritize this group are expected soon.

Precisely when and where “Phase 1b” groups will receive the vaccine will become known as we see what supply is available, and how the State is guiding us to use it. We will likely be setting up special vaccine clinics (with volunteer staff and our consistent partners, the EMS teams) and also work with pharmacies, clinics, and hospitals. Follow our webpage and social media channels for next steps.

These next few weeks will likely be very challenging. Please take extra steps to be careful, but don’t lose hope. Things will almost certainly be better in a few months, and I think we can see the possibility of a more normal life in the Spring and Summer.

Gary Pace, MD, MPH