



## San Francisco Department of Public Health

Grant Colfax, MD  
Director of Health

City and County of San Francisco  
London N. Breed  
Mayor

# Director's Report for Health Commission Meeting of May 21, 2024

*A current overview of issues affecting the state of public health in San Francisco*

<https://sf.gov/departments/san-francisco-health-commission/past-meetings>

*In alignment with the California Department of Public Health, we will no longer report on COVID-19 case data. More people are now testing themselves at home for COVID-19 and we do not get data from at-home testing. This affects the accuracy of data on testing volume. We will continue to report on key indicators of COVID-19 severity and spread including [hospitalizations](#) and [test positivity](#).*

### **DPH AND SUPERVISOR MATT DORSEY INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO REQUIRE BUPRENORPHINE MEDICATION FOR OPIOID DEPENDENCY IN PHARMACIES**

DPH and Supervisor Matt Dorsey introduced legislation requiring San Francisco pharmacies to stock buprenorphine, one of the three FDA-approved medications for treating opioid use disorder (OUD). This legislation, co-sponsored by Supervisors Rafael Mandelman, Hillary Ronen, and Dean Preston, and will make it easier for individuals to access addiction treatment when and where they need it.

Buprenorphine effectively reduces opioid use and cravings, alleviates uncomfortable withdrawal symptoms, facilitates long-term recovery, and reduces the risk of dying by 50 percent. This legislation, believed to be the first of such kind in the country, is the latest effort to improve treatment availability. If enacted, the proposed law would amend the municipal Health Code to require all retail pharmacies citywide that stock controlled substances prescription drugs to stock sufficient buprenorphine for at least two new prescriptions.

Although buprenorphine has been successfully employed in the treatment of OUD worldwide for many years, obstacles to more patients using the medication have long been noted. In response to challenges of underuse and availability, in 2023 the federal government removed a requirement that practitioners complete additional training and obtain a special waiver prior to prescribing buprenorphine. By removing this requirement, the number of prescribers capable of prescribing buprenorphine increased nationally.



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This mandate is part of the ongoing programmatic, policy and legislative efforts to make treatment more accessible in San Francisco. Legislation recently passed to make it easier to procure public health beds and provide flexibility in obtaining mental health and/or substance use disorder beds. DPH and City and County of San Francisco is sponsoring State Assembly Bill 2115 introduced by Assemblymember Haney which would align California law with federal regulations to reduce barriers to treatment for OUD. In addition, DPH continues to increase hours of program operations, open additional sites, and types of services, and to bring treatment to people to support their entry into and retention in care.

### **PLAN TO PURCHASE HAYES VALLEY ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY**

Mayor London N. Breed and DPH announced plans to purchase an assisted living facility in Hayes Valley, preserving essential beds and services for more than 55 San Franciscan senior citizens.

The property at 624 Laguna Street currently serves as an assisted living home, also known as a board and care or residential care facility. The state-licensed facility will provide a home for people who require 24-hour care to meet their daily needs, with programming and support for clients' daily health necessities. This is the first of two facilities in the area that the City is aiming to purchase.

The City has more than 3,000 private and public assisted living beds. While San Francisco has maintained a consistent number of beds since 2021, there continues to be shifts and consolidations in the private market. This longstanding assisted living facility has changed operators in recent years. Under DPH ownership, the main difference in operation will be moving away from private-pay residents towards clients of DPH.

The 624 Laguna Street building will continue to operate as assisted living for approximately 55 people over the age of 60. The facility will be staffed 24/7. Clients in the facility receive help with daily tasks, such as meal preparation, medication, housekeeping, and personal care.

### **HIGHLIGHTING MENTAL HEALTH CARE**

During Mental Health Awareness Month each May, DPH educates and engages the public about the vital importance of mental health care. This year, DPH developed a social media campaign to highlight our diverse and culturally competent mental health programs at locations such as the Chinatown Child Development Center and the OMI Family Center. The campaign spotlighted our wide range of mental health services for children, families and people experiencing homelessness throughout San Francisco.



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### **DPH HONORS ASIAN AMERICAN, NATIVE AMERICAN, NATIVE HAWAIIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER (AANHPI) HERITAGE MONTH**

DPH leadership and staff celebrated the contributions of the Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities throughout the month. On May 2, Deputy Director of Health Dr. Naveena Bobba joined Mayor London Breed at the APA Heritage Awards and Reception Ceremony. The event honored groups and members that have positively contributed to San Francisco and the community for the past century.

DPH teams recognized the AANHPI community by hosting internal events at Whole Person Integrated Care and ZSFG and sharing awareness statements from the Office of Health Equity and Behavioral Health Services.

### **LAGUNA HONDA CELEBRATES NURSES WEEK**

This year's Nurses Week theme was "Nurses Make the Difference" – which could not be truer of our wonderful Laguna Honda nurses and the immeasurable impact they have on our residents and their loved ones. Skilled nursing is a very special part of the nursing profession. In skilled nursing, we build strong relationships and invest in the wellbeing of our residents over weeks, or years, or until the end of life. It is this consistent and holistic care for some of the most medically vulnerable that makes nurses in long term care settings extraordinary people. It was with great joy that we celebrated Laguna Honda nurses at an all-staff event last week with ice cream, music, gifts, and fun. The work to support, celebrate, and grow the nursing teams at Laguna Honda continues every day of the year.

### **ZSFG CELEBRATES NURSES WEEK**

ZSFG Hospital celebrated its nurses during Nurse's Week (May 6-12) with treats, a commemorative tote bag, massages and ice cream sandwiches delivered to all the nursing units and clinics by their union. Several nurses, medical assistants and staff who work closely with nursing teams received accolades at an awards ceremony held on Friday, May 10. Winners of this year's **Daisy Awards**, recognizing nurses and nursing teams for their commitment to patient care and clinical expertise, were Evelyn Granados, Edna Parades, Brittany Rodriguez, Glenda Sabillo and Lani Schofield. **BEE Awards** winners recognized for excellence among the team members who work alongside our nursing teams include Marita Chan, Sothearith Chanty, Christine Fermin, Yesenia Gomez-Rodriguez, Maria Kinney, Dora Mai, Gisella Medina, Chase MacLennan, Amy Mincher, Arun Narayan, Liz Nitural, Nora Noel, Tereese Sanders, Alvin Tinio, Suyin Li, Dongqing (Crystal) Tan and Juan Juan Yu. Alonn Ilan and Kelly Swift received the **O'Connell Society Awards** as nurse leaders whose professional contributions have significantly improved care delivery, patient



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outcomes and community health. Rosana Leon and Christine Struble received the Friends of Nursing Awards for their support of our nursing teams. Special shout outs went to our ZSFG preceptors who oversee nurse training, all the nurses who received promotions this year, the BERT team and the infusion clinic nurses.

### **PHEPR PRESENTS AT CDPH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TRAINING WORKSHOP**

The California Department of Public Health held its annual state-wide Emergency Preparedness Training Workshop on May 8-10<sup>th</sup>. Thirteen PHEPR staff participated in the conference, with several presenting on various emergency preparedness and response topics. Dr. Andi Tenner, PHEPR's Director, presented on "Health Planning Considerations for a National Special Security Event," highlighting DPH's and PHEPR's contributions to the planning of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) conference held in San Francisco in November 2023. Tiffany Rivera, PHEPR's Deputy Director, co-presented with the UCSF Center for Climate Health and Equity on "Assessing Clinical Climate Emergency Preparedness in San Francisco". Kenpou Saelee, PHEPR's Healthcare Preparedness Manager and Amy Ovadia, PHEPR's Healthcare Planning Lead, presented with the US Secret Service and the State Department Diplomatic Security Service on "Medical Care for Federally Protected Dignitaries", highlighting DPH and PHEPR's collaboration with national partners on the planning and response for APEC.

### **PHEPR EMPLOYEE RECEIVES "ROOKIE OF THE YEAR" AWARD**

DPH Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response (PHEPR) is thrilled that our teammate Mariecar Dela Cruz won the California Department of Public Health "Rookie of the Year" award, which was presented at their 2024 Emergency Preparedness Training Workshop. Mariecar was nominated for this award after joining the PHEPR Healthcare Response Team as a Permanent Civil Service employee in April 2023. During this short period of time, Mariecar has demonstrated innovative thought, forward-thinking, and a creative mindset in her healthcare planning efforts. She has developed or contributed to several tools that facilitate healthcare information sharing and information collection, with an eye towards problem-solving and new discovery. She was a key contributor to the development of the following tools: San Francisco Healthcare Facility GIS map; a situation status form; and a healthcare facility profile database. We are grateful to have Mariecar as part of the team. Congratulations!

### **ZSFG HOSTS INAUGURAL EQUITY AWARDS CEREMONY**

ZSFG's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion team and Equity Council Committee hosted the First Annual Equity Awards in Carr Auditorium on May 15. At the event, ZSFG CEO Dr. Susan Ehrlich



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addressed a full house of awardees, staff and leaders, saying, “We added equity to our True North goals in 2017, and we have been on a journey to do better ever since then.” During the event hospital leaders presented the awards and shared videos spotlighting each winner.

Awardees included Ana Delgado, Ursula Griffiths-Randolph, Dannielle McBride and Liseli Mulala from ZSFG’s clinical staff; Brenda Barros and Bilal Chaney from non-clinical staff; Anthony Anies and Karen Napitan from leadership; and the entire departmental staff from Soujournd Chaplaincy, Trauma Surgery Nurse Practitioners and the Wraparound Project. Former ZSFG COO Andrea Turner received the Dr. Andre Campbell Career Achievement Award for demonstrating commitment to equity during her tenure at ZSFG and for co-founding the Equity Council with ZSFG’s Director of DE&I, Sophia Lai.

### **DPH ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS MOSQUITO CONTROL AWARENESS WEEK**

April 14-20 was Mosquito Control Awareness Week in the State of California. This annual statewide event is designed to raise awareness and educate the public on effective mosquito prevention. Despite their tiny size, mosquitos are the deadliest creature worldwide, because they transmit viruses like malaria, West Nile virus, and Dengue fever. DPH Environmental Health Branch’s Healthy Housing Program highlighted this awareness week by having staff participate in community events, including “Bug Day” at the Randall Museum. Staff at this event displayed a chamber with live mosquito larvae, pupae, flying adults, and mosquito fish. All were a big hit with the children and a great opportunity to learn how to prevent being bitten. In addition, staff gave a presentation to the third-grade class at the Cornerstone Academy on the mosquito life cycle. This presentation included leaving a mosquito tank with live larvae and pupae. Staff will return to the class to educate the children on the differences between male and female mosquitos once the larvae have matured into adults. Thank you to Senior Inspector and Vector Control Specialist, Nader Shatara, who organized these events along with technicians, Roberto Arevalo, David Arrizon, Si Ying Liu, Vincent Mai, Madison Paige Tabora and Kimberly Punty.

### **COVID-19 UPDATE**

As of 5/16:

- San Francisco’s 7-day rolling average of COVID test positivity is 1.4% and there are 33 COVID hospitalizations.
- Thirty-one percent of SF residents are fully up to date on their COVID vaccinations and have received the updated vaccine.

[DPH in the News](#)