



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 7, 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](#), [deaths](#), and [test positivity](#).

PHEPR OPERATION ENCORE

On Thursday, April 25, DPH Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response (PHEPR) branch conducted "Operation Encore," a full-scale operations-based emergency exercise co-sponsored by San Francisco Emergency Medical Services Agency, San Francisco Health Care Coalition San Francisco Fire Department EMS, and San Francisco State University (SFSU) and Tamarack Consulting. Operation Encore was the capstone event in a series of emergency exercises focused on mass casualty incident response, the planning for which began in November 2022.

There were multiple objectives for this exercise, including testing our City systems' ability to coordinate response to a mass casualty incident and share information across multiple agencies; understanding our healthcare system's ability to handle medical surge.

This effort was one of the largest emergency exercises held in the City in the last 20 years and involved over 400 people from more than 17 agencies and organizations working together to make the day a success. Coordinated exercise operations took place at 12 different locations, including SFSU and our local hospitals. The exercise scenario: *During a concert/event at SFSU, faulty wiring caused a pyrotechnic explosion on the stage, leading to the stage collapsing, resulting in numerous crush injuries and the crowd rushing for the exits.*

With the assistance of some intentionally disorienting A/V and over 120 fully-mouled volunteers helped create a realistic scene, first responders arrived to secure the scene and began triage operations and notional transport of patients to hospitals using ReddiNet.



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DPH public information officers also participated in the exercise to practice skills and test protocols focused on information sharing and public information and warning, culminating in a mock press conference.

Exercise play extended throughout the afternoon, with notional patients “arriving” at local hospitals, prompting hospitals to activate surge plans and simulate treatment of patients. Additionally, two hospitals hosted moulaged volunteers to help enhance the exercise experience. And finally, DPH staff practiced information sharing, situational awareness, and Department Operations Center (DOC) coordination as part of the DPH Healthcare DOC.

Operation Encore concluded at 3:00pm and was immediately followed with debrief and feedback sessions from participants and evaluators occurring independently at all sites. Over the next several weeks, the PHEPR Training, Exercise and QI team will continue to gather feedback on the successes and challenges experienced during the exercise and collect data from information sharing tools. This information will be analyzed and used to support the findings for the Operation Encore After Action Report. Areas for improvement in this report will be used to address gaps in planning, make corrections to protocols and procedures, and set our City up to be better prepared to respond to many different types of emergencies.

ALCOHOL SOBERING CENTER OVERDOSE PREVENTION ENGAGEMENT PILOT

The DPH Alcohol Sobering Center first piloted Safe Recovery for people who use opioids in 2017. Building on lessons learned from that pilot, Whole Person Integrated Care (WPIC) is bringing the resources of the Alcohol Sobering Center to support overdose prevention and treatment engagement for people experiencing homelessness. After someone goes to the hospital following a non-fatal opioid overdose, there is often not a safe and supportive place for them to engage with service providers, stabilize on medication for opioid use disorder, and take next steps for treatment. To help fill that gap, WPIC launched “SCOPE”, the Alcohol Sobering Center Overdose Prevention Engagement pilot on April 29. Alcohol Sobering brings the following strengths to the overdose response effort:

- We are open and have nursing staff on site 24/7/365.
- We have a long history of nursing-driven assessments for intoxication and withdrawal.
- We have strong relationships with Emergency Rooms, Fire/EMS partners, and other WPIC teams (including the Post-Overdose Engagement Team or POET).
- We have existing protocols to start medications for addiction treatment and withdrawal.



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- We regularly transfer patients to detox or residential substance use treatment.

Through leveraging these resources, SCOPE will be able to safely help bridge individuals between the hospital and next steps in treatment. Following Emergency Room clearance after an overdose, the POET team will coordinate referral to the Alcohol Sobering Center, where services available will include:

- Safe recovery monitoring for intoxication.
- Resuscitation and stabilization in case of recurrent overdose.
- Assessment of withdrawal and provision of medications for withdrawal management.
- Individual substance use counseling to identify patient goals.
- Patient education on substance use treatment and overdose prevention.
- Medical assessment and on-site initiation of buprenorphine and naltrexone, including microdosing formulations and long-acting injectable medications.
- Linkage to opioid treatment program for methadone initiation, including addressing barriers to methadone start (lack of insurance, ID, transportation).
- Linkage to inpatient and outpatient substance use treatment.
- Linkage to longitudinal POET team case management where appropriate.

INCENTIVE SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR IMPROVEMENT AND RECOVERY (INSPIRE)

INSPIRE is a low-barrier contingency management program for people with stimulant use disorder. It is a collaboration between WPIC and DPH Primary Care which currently serves patients seen at Maria X. Martinez Health Resource Center and Tom Waddell Urban Health Center.

Contingency management is a form of behavioral treatment that positively reinforces a desired behavior. Contingency management recognizes that many harmful factors in our patients' lives (poverty, homelessness, racism, trauma, pain, etc.) reinforce substance use, at times despite their desire to change. INSPIRE seeks to help decrease the reinforcing effects of substance use by providing alternate positive reinforcement in the form of positive interactions, community, and financial incentives. The INSPIRE care team includes behavioral health clinicians, health workers, peers, and medical providers.

INSPIRE is structured to include:

- Twice weekly sessions for 12 weeks
- Community group and one-on-one check-ins every session
- Gift cards for attendance and optional urine testing



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INSPIRE is graduating its second cohort of participants and preparing to start a third cohort. We have seen high rates of engagement and regular attendance, with participants particularly appreciating the group/community building component of the program. INSPIRE is designed to support goals of both abstinence and reduction in harmful substance use. One participant said, "I managed to eliminate my usage gradually by setting small goals each week." One-hundred percent of INSPIRE graduates reported a reduction in substance use, with 25% that participated in urine tests testing negative for stimulants.

People with stimulant use disorder who use opioids rarely or unintentionally may be at high risk for fatal opioid overdose. Contingency management offers significant benefit for overdose prevention through helping people stabilize their stimulant use. INSPIRE clients receive overdose prevention counseling and naltrexone. To date, only one INSPIRE client reported an overdose while enrolled in the 12-week program despite 58% having reported a prior overdose.

PHEPR DIRECTOR GIVES GRAND ROUNDS AT EMORY UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE

PHEPR Branch Director Dr. Andi Tenner gave Grand Rounds at Emory University Department of Emergency Medicine on April 30. She spoke to an audience of approximately 75 faculty and residents in Atlanta, GA and discussed "Preparing for Emergencies in a Changing World". The talk focused on health threats over the next decade and ways to mitigate their impact on the public and on the healthcare system. Thank you to Dr. Tenner for sharing San Francisco's expert knowledge with other jurisdictions!

DPH ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PARTICIPATES AT ONSITE WATER REUSE SUMMIT

In 2012, the City and County of San Francisco adopted the Onsite Water Reuse for Commercial, Multi-Family and Mixed-Use Development Ordinance which is commonly known as the Non-potable Water Ordinance. These amendments were added to the San Francisco Health Code Article 12C and the DPH Environmental Health Branch Water Reuse Program is tasked with its enforcement. This code covers the requirements for reusing alternative water sources like rainwater, stormwater and graywater as a source of water for flushing toilets, irrigation and other non-potable uses.

San Francisco has been a leader in water re-use systems and Senior Inspector Douglas Obana was recently asked to participate in the Onsite Water Reuse Summit hosted by the US Environmental Protection Agency in Washington DC. Mr. Obana participated as a panel member discussing San



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San Francisco's experience and lessons learned around the application of alternative water source systems. Specifically, Mr. Obana was able to speak to the importance of DPH's role in permitting and overseeing these systems.

San Francisco is now one of the jurisdictions with the most permitted onsite alternative water source locations in the US. One example is the recently opened Chase Center which is designed to collect and treat rainwater, stormwater, graywater and condensate to supply toilet flushing demands in the arena. The project is estimated to offset about 3.7 million gallons of potable water annually. DPH in collaboration with the Public Utilities Commission's work in the field of onsite alternative water source systems continue to provide the framework and template for other jurisdictions to follow.

ZSFG CELEBRATES SOCIAL WORKER MONTH

ZSFG celebrated Social Worker Month in March 2024 with the theme of "Empowering Social Workers – Inspiring Workers, Leading Change." At ZSFG, our social workers play an important role in helping patients and their loved ones in their journey of healing. Our social workers provide care to thousands of patients every year from trauma care to general support. This year, members of our social work team were recognized and awarded for going above and beyond to serve our patients with equity and dignity. Thank you and congratulations to the awardees:

- Ida B. Wells Service Award - Elise Rosenberg, MSW
- Ronald G. Lewis Social Justice Award – Jenee Bryant, LCSW
- Diana Ming Chan Integrity Award – Liza Wu, MSW
- Mila Ruiz Tecala Importance of Human Relationships Award – Amy Furr, MSW
- Antonia Pantoja Competence Award – Danielle Nightingale, LCSW
- Lynette Pagnilawan Dignity and Worth of a Person Award – Gilma Cruz, MSW

LAGUNA HONDA RECERTIFICATION UPDATE

Surveyors from the Centers for Medicare and Medicare Services and the California Department of Public Health were onsite for a revisit survey for the December 2023 Medicare Certification Survey, to resolve two plans of correction related to our falls process, and to review 22 complaints/incidents. Surveyors arrived on Monday, April 15 and exited on Friday, April 19.

Preliminary findings indicate zero deficiencies related to the Medicare Certification Survey and zero deficiencies related to the two falls process plans of correction. The entire Laguna Honda team is incredibly proud of this result.



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We do anticipate a single deficiency from one of the 22 complaints/incidents, and we expect that we must resolve this deficiency before full recertification.

Surveyors from CDPH returned to Laguna Honda on Monday, April 29 to review additional complaints/incidents. The facility reported incidents are from March 2024 and April 2024. At this time, surveyors have not exited the facility.

Complaints/incidents will continue to be investigated by our regulators and may impact our recertification timeline.

COVID-19 UPDATE

As of 5/2:

- San Francisco's 7-day rolling average of COVID test positivity is 1.5% 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](#)