

**COVID-19 Teleconference with LA County Public Health  
for Colleges and Universities  
March 10, 2021 3 p.m.**

**SPEAKERS**

- Barbara Ferrer, PHD, MPH, MEd, Director, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
- Robert Gilchick, MD, MPH, Child and Adolescent Health Section Chief, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
- Dawn Terashita, MD, Associate Director, Acute Communicable Disease Control Program

**VACCINATION**

More than 500 sites are open, including pharmacies, small clinics, large clinics, a Kaiser megapod, etc. Of the 500, 375 are County-run.

In the next week or so, one of five megapods will be open only for educators. This is called a “restricted” site. Most sites are not restricted and those eligible for the vaccine should go anywhere they can to receive it.

**REOPENING HIGHER ED (Dr. Gilchick)**

- When LA County reaches Red Tier, it will be “a game changer” and there will be newly permitted activities, which align with State guidance. These include:
  - Greatly expanded in-person curriculum
  - ***No limit on in-person courses colleges can offer; however, capacity is at 25 percent OR 100 people, whichever is smaller***
  - Outdoor instruction recommended when possible
  - For larger lectures, synchronous and virtual instruction should be offered
  - Science labs, art studios, skills labs do not have a capacity limit but must physically distance and practice other safety measures
  - Dining services can reopen in alignment with State guidelines
  - International students with F1 visas can come to institutes of higher education when the colleges/universities are ready

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

Q. Can we have Commencement?

A. Look at what has opened for outdoor live events: while in the Red Tier, it’s 20 percent capacity with all protections in place. But we could be in Orange or even Yellow by summer.

Q. Faculty and staff are concerned about coming back because they don’t feel safe. What should we tell them?

A. There are tens of thousands of worksites that have remain opened (since the pandemic started) and they have not experienced any outbreaks. Sites that follow the protocols and safety directives provide a lot of protection. Those things work. It is possible for the higher education sector to operate safely. This feels a lot safer for everyone because there is less community transmission and more people are being vaccinated.

Q. Any plan for requiring mandatory vaccination?

A. We are not anticipating requiring mandatory vaccinations for students to come on to campus or enter residence halls because this vaccine is relatively new and under Emergency Authorization Use. I do not see us leading that charge.

Q. If professional ballparks are allowed to open on April 1 with spectators, can we open our ballparks/stadiums to spectators?

A. No, this guidance does not apply to collegiate sports. It is not a local decision. The state would have to change its guidance to allow that.

– Dr. Ferrer

- We may be in the Red Tier as soon as Saturday. “We didn’t think we would be moving to Red so quickly so we’re a little behind.” We are working to get new guidance posted by Friday
- Cases continue to decline, as do hospitalizations and deaths. This week, our case positivity rates are 5.2/100,000 people.
- Yet, COVID is the leading cause of death in LA County, and we remain on a precipice: our numbers can continue to decline or skyrocket because of gatherings (Spring break, St. Patrick’s Day, Passover, Easter). They are still worried.
- We could be Orange Tier or even Yellow Tier by summer if we remain under 10 cases/100,000
- Questions? (877) 777-5799