

Coronavirus Update: Telebriefing for Institutes for Higher Education

10/15/2020

WHO

- 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, MPH, Associate Director
Acute Communicable Disease Control Program

WHERE ARE WE IN STATE TIERS

New tiered system from the state is a framework for the county. State places the county in tiers that measure community transmission. County can be more restrictive than state, but not the other way around.

Transmission Stats (Tier 1):

- LA County now has 7.6 cases per 100K people
- There is a 10-day delay in metrics
- This keeps us in Tier 1
- To get to Tier 2, we need to have 7 cases or less per 100K people.
- Number have been up the last 2 weeks
- With the three stats, the state puts counties in the most restrictive tier.

Daily Positive Test Rate (Tier 3):

- Ours is 3.7%
- There is a 10 day delay in metrics
- That rate continues to place county in tier 3

Health Equity Metric (Tier 2):

- This metric is designed to reflect the disadvantage some communities face
- Daily positive test rate for disadvantaged groups rose to 6%. This is compared to 3.7% across the county. There is a disproportionate impact on disadvantaged communities.
- This puts us in Tier 2 for equity measure.
- Last week we were in Tier 3, so the gap has widened.

Overall, there is still a lot of community transmission. Slight increase in case numbers compared to last week. Positivity rate is up.

There have been outbreaks at worksites and there have been social gatherings causing outbreaks. Outbreaks are occurring, especially students living off campus.

Hospitalization and death rates are eventually increase if the rate of positive tests goes up. When positive cases go up, then hospitalization goes up, and then death rates go up.

UPDATED HEALTH ORDER

Yesterday, the public health order was updated to better align with the state. Households can gather with two other households for a short duration outside. It should be a stable group of small households. Excluded from this are frats, sorority, dorms or hotels. Must be outside with face covering on. No communal dining is allowed. Event must be 2 hours or less.

HIGHER ED PROTOCOL

Most recent changes was to allow setting up outdoor spaces for students to study. This is only for students already on campus. The county does not want colleges to bring more students to campus.

The state also updated guidance specifically around athletics. This is meant for conference sports and competitive leagues, not recreational sports.

There is guidance on what to do with an outbreak posted online

Q&A

Can they allow more students to live on campus to control parties and support mental health?

It's a local county decision. The county is not planning to move to reopen campuses. It depends where we are as a county in the tier system. Hope to move to Tier 2 in the next few weeks. Need less community transmission. No campus can really create a bubble environment.

Colleges want more opening. Does the county trust us to do better than last spring?

Yes, there is trust. It's not about not trusting folks. We have the same issues before us. It's about weighing the situation. Hundreds of thousands of students coming back. That's a group struggling to create a new normal. They're our biggest spreaders in our community. San Diego had the threat to move back one tier because of outbreaks on one campus.

Not opening in the spring could be the end of the campus financially. How soon can we get information about beginning the months' long process to reopen or repopulate?

We have a plan now you can see online now from the state.

We urge you wherever possible to offer virtual learning opportunities. There are staff and students in high risk. But it's good to have that plan ready if you're able to open in January. You can also have a plan B if things don't go well. There is also room for a plan C where maybe there is a hybrid model. Maybe create a restrictive environment where you can bring more people on campus. If you bring people to the residence halls, can you meet the needs they have and limiting exposures.

In September she was more optimistic than now. By middle of November we will give a better sense of what January will look like so you have some time to prepare.

Concern. In mid-November if we hear we can bring more. What happens if January there is a surge and we have to pull back? What about the cost of all the special equipment?

Opening and then closing is worse than just to stay closed. Likely in November they will allow some of the modifications and open more classes. It's better to keep the students there than spread them to their communities. Students who are sick on campus need to be able to quarantine on campus. They do not WANT to close a school or a program, it's a necessity.

Next call in the next few weeks before middle November so campuses can plan.