

**COVID-19 Teleconference with LA County Public Health
For Colleges and Universities
November 24, 2020 – 4 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

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

- Dr. Ferrer reported “we’re in a crisis right now” and called the rate of community transmission “raging”
- Ten months into the pandemic and the County is reporting the highest number of cases ever – 6,000+.
- Hospitalizations are increasing at 100 per day and there are 1,600 hospitalizations a day
 - This is a 73 percent increase over Nov. 7, when hospitalizations totaled 829
 - Of those hospitalized, 25 to 30 percent of patients are in the ICU
- We should expect numbers to be at over 2,200 a day in the next 10 days because hospitalizations lag behind case data
 - Deaths lag four weeks
- County officials are very concerned about the impact of the holiday on case numbers and that the amount of travel does not bode well
- If there is a continuation of explosion of cases, our health care system will get overwhelmed
- County health officials want people to stay home for the next two to three weeks and do all they can to reduce interactions with those not in the same household

NEXT STEPS FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Students that are planning to return to home out-of-state for the Thanksgiving holiday are advised to stay home for the rest of the semester. If these students do return to California, it is recommended they quarantine for 14 days.

The County has developed a proposal, in response to comments and feedback from colleges and universities, to expand activities on campus (no earlier than January 2021) dependent on case rate dropping below threshold of 10/100,000 residents. These include:

- Arts studios and music practice rooms could be made available and reopened for individual or very small activities to fulfill academic requirements
 - Limited to four people, including instructor
 - Must maintain safety protocols (masks, social distance, etc)
- Outdoor study and support sessions for struggling students (as defined by institution)
 - Limited to 10 people, including instructor
 - Must maintain safety protocols (masks, social distance, etc)
- Libraries would be able to re-open to registered students and staff/faculty
 - 25 percent maximum capacity
- Film and video music production would be allowed on campus for purposes of sharing instructional or cultural content that is not otherwise available
- Will not consider increasing of the number of students who are residing on campus in campus housing
- Applications will be available in December for those interested in participating in a limited pilot up to 10 schools that can create a quasi bubble for students residing on campus

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question: If case numbers came down, would students who don't reside on campus be able to come onto campus to use library?

Answer: These expanded proposals for activities make allowances for students to come to campus to access resources and activities.

Question: How do we apply to be in a bubble?

Answer: Application materials will be available in December. Approval would be contingent upon review and the County hitting that threshold.

Question: Have you thought about how you will be using higher education for vaccine distribution?

Answer: We are actively working on our vaccination distribution plan. We have been preparing from the start, but there are a lot of unknowns. We will be calling on all our many partners to help us. This is a joint federal, state, and local effort. Plans have not been locked in but we are creating a workgroup to make sure we are paying attention to the diverse needs across the County. There will be a limited amount of vaccine available for months to come. It will take a while to get this out to everyone.