



News from the Emergency Management Committee Chair (3/5/21)

Blue Shield Officially Takes over California's COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Network

On Monday, March 1, California officially transitioned its COVID-19 vaccination system to health care provider Blue Shield. The company is technically serving as a third-party administrator. Allocating vaccine doses began on Thursday.

In January, Governor Newsom announced the goal for Blue Shield to help expedite the vaccine roll out. Blue shield told *ABC 7 News* that they hope to increase the states capacity for delivery of COVID-19 vaccines from 1 million doses per week to 4 million doses per week by the end of March.

On Monday, Governor Newsom was hopeful saying, “9.1 million vaccinations have been administered in the state of California. Positivity rate that should make everyone feel a bit more positive about where we are. Down 2.3% today.”

To meet their goal, Blue Shield says “Providers will receive a three-week allocation plan so they can plan appointments effectively. The supply each provider receives may be adjusted during each three-week period, based on how the provider meets the goals of the program.”

Blue Shield will begin by taking over counties in the Central Valley as part of their first wave and then move to Southern California counties and some Bay Area counties in their second wave. They then plan to cover the entire Bay Area region as part of their third and final wave. They hope to be fully in charge of the state's vaccination system by the end of March.

Nearly 400,000 Doses of Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 Vaccine Headed to California

ABC 7 News reports nearly 4 million doses of the Johnson & Johnson, single-dose COVID-19 vaccine are headed to the United States, including California. Governor Newsom announced California is expected to receive around 380,000 doses this week.

The White House said the entire stockpile of the new vaccine went out on the night of Sunday, February 28. Johnson & Johnson plans to deliver around 16 million more doses by the end of March and 100 million in total by the end of June. However, the distribution would be back loaded.

Unlike the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, the new Johnson & Johnson vaccine requires only one dose and does not need to be stored in a specialized freezer. These two characteristics make the vaccine easier to administer.

This new vaccine is said to be 85% effective in preventing severe or critical illness. During clinical trials, it has been shown to also be effective against the South African and Brazilian variants.

Doctors claim just because its efficacy is slightly lower than the first two approved vaccines, it is not a second-rate vaccine.

7 California Counties Move to Red COVID Tier – 9 Others Could Improve Next Week

[The Sacramento Bee reports](#) that state health officials promoted seven counties out of the strict purple tier into the looser red tier of California's framework to gradually reopen from coronavirus restrictions. These counties include El Dorado, Lassen, Modoc, Napa, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Clara.

The red tier allows for fewer restrictions on businesses and activities than the previous purple tier. This means restaurants may reopen indoor dining areas, and several other sectors including gyms and movie theaters for indoor operations.

These seven counties are joining 11 others who were previously placed in looser tiers. Those counties included Alpine, Del Norte, Humboldt, Marin, Mariposa, Plumas, San Mateo, Shasta, Sierra, Trinity, and Yolo.

Additionally, nine purple counties across the state notched one week of credit and will join the red tier next week if their COVID-19 rates remain beneath the necessary thresholds. These counties include Alameda, Butte, Calaveras, Imperial, Mono, Placer, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Tuolumne.

More details on the meaning of tiers, statistics from across the state, and what this could mean for the reopening of schools can be found [here](#).

Watch: Governor Newsom on School Reopening Efforts, COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution

On Monday, March 1, Governor Gavin Newsom provided an update on the state's vaccination and school reopening efforts. He was joined by Senate President pro Tempore Toni G. Atkins, Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, and other legislative leaders. A video of his press conference can be found on [The East Bay Time's website](#).

Cal OSHA Offers Additional Guidance for Its COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards: Testing Sites and Scope of Coverage

[The National Law Review reports](#) it has been three months since California approved the Division of Occupational Safety and Health's (Cal OSHA) [COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standard \("ETS"\)](#). The implementation of Cal OSHA's ETS confused some employers. For example, some [agricultural employers challenged the ETS](#) that it was ambiguous, imposed overwhelming compliance obligations on employers, and did not consider costs or feasibility. Other employers raised concerns about requirements in the ETS in public forums, through written questions to Cal OSHA.

Cal OSHA responded to the concerns by [publishing a series of online FAQs](#) at the beginning of January. After the initial series of FAQs, Cal OSHA updated and revised the FAQs on January 26, and February 26. The most recent rounds of FAQs updates added new guidance on testing and the ETS's scope of coverage.

Recent updates to the FAQ, in regard to testing, clarify that employers have two primary options: the employer can (1) partner with a medical provider to establish a testing program; or (2) use the free testing services provided by the state or county health department. To locate county testing facilities, the employer should check the local county or city health department's website. To locate the correct website, employers may visit the [California Department of Public Health](#) or the [National Association of County and City Health Officials](#) website, and click on the applicable county or city health department. Although not mentioned in the updated FAQs, the state also maintains a website [on COVID-19 testing locations](#) that employers can use to find testing locations. Cal OSHA's FAQ updates also convey that employers who need to test a large number of employees on a regular basis can partner with the State of California Valencia Branch Laboratory ("VBL") to set up on-site testing of employees.

In regard to the scope of coverage, Cal OSHA's updated FAQ confirms that emergency responders that are protected by the ATD standard are exempt from the ETS. This is shown by Cal OSHA's example that firefighters cannot be subject to both the ETS and ATD standards at the same time. Simply put, the firefighter must be protected from COVID-19 under one of the standards, but not by both. If the employer's ATD Prevention Plan does not identify the firefighter as having occupational exposure to aerosol transmissible diseases, or if the firefighter is not protected under that plan, the ETS will apply. Employers in healthcare and emergency response will therefore need to carefully evaluate COVID-19 exposures in their workplaces and operations and ensure that employees are protected by the preventive measures under either the ETS or ATD standard. Under this guidance, however, an employer cannot take the position that its entire workplace or operations are exempt from the ETS if only some of its employees are covered by the ATD standard. Employers in healthcare and emergency response may therefore need to comply with both the ATD and ETS in different areas of their operations.

The National Law Review predicts that Cal OSHA will continue issuing new FAQs and guidance to employers, given the expedited roll-out of Cal OSHA's ETS and the ongoing litigation surrounding the ETS. The full ETS can be viewed [here](#).

CA Emergency Medical System Recovering After 'Insane' Period

[Government Technology reports](#) that emergency medical services workers may finally get to breathe a sigh of relief after Kern County's emergency medical services system finally hit levels not seen since the early part of the coronavirus winter surge. Kern County Public Health Services has returned the county's EMS System Surge Plan to the lowest of four tiers due to improvement in 911 call volume, increased ambulance availability, lower offload times and percentage of staff impacted by COVID-19.

Enacted as COVID-19 cases were skyrocketing at the end of December, the plan was meant to protect the county's medical system as patients threatened to overwhelm it. Using lessons learned from the summer surge, the plan allowed the county to remain self-sufficient throughout the worst of the winter surge.

In July and August, the county had needed state ambulance "strike teams" to keep up with the demand. But in December and January, even as cases nearly doubled the count during the summer surge, local EMS providers were able to keep up with the call volume themselves.

With 11,050 emergency calls in December, followed by 10,648 in January, the county's EMS service was strained like it never had been before. The pandemic introduced the added difficulty of requiring decontamination of ambulances any time a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patient was taken to the hospital.

On Dec. 30, the county introduced its surge plan, which was meant to streamline procedures and keep as many ambulances running as possible.

A key part of the plan was a change in how EMS personnel responded to "low acuity" calls, or patients who do not need immediate medical assistance. Instead of taking the caller to an emergency room in an ambulance, EMS staff would either advise the caller to seek treatment with their primary care provider or urgent care.

The county also reduced the amount of time an ambulance would have to idle in front of an emergency room by designating a specific employee to handle offloads. Previously, some ambulances would wait for hours to deliver a patient to hospital staff. Under the new system, wait times lowered, allowing more ambulances to be in circulation at one time.

Inside the hospitals, doctors and nurses worked long shifts and struggled to find beds for everyone seeking care.

Throughout February, EMS saw a significant drop in the number of patients seeking care.

If the pattern continues, the county may be headed toward levels not seen since October. New vaccines being distributed give health officials hope the downward slope will be permanent. Still, COVID-19 variants could add difficulty to the upcoming months.

History could also repeat itself and another wave of coronavirus could roll over Kern County.

‘Hero Pay’: Los Angeles City Council Votes to Finalize \$5/hour Emergency Ordinance

[ABC 7 News reports that the Los Angeles City Council finalized an emergency ordinance](#) on Wednesday, requiring large grocery and pharmacy retailers to offer employees an additional \$5 per hour in hazard pay amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The \$5 hazard pay will be required for all non-managerial employees at grocery or drug retail stores with more than 300 employees nationwide, or more than 10 employees on-site, as well as retail stores, such as Walmart and Target, that dedicate 10% of their sales floor to groceries or drug retail.

This hazard pay will be given in addition to employees’ base wages for the next 120 days.

Long Beach also enacted a \$4 hazard pay ordinance, which was challenged in court. Kroger announced last month that it would close two of its stores in Long Beach as a response to the ordinance, a Ralphs location and a Food4Less store.

The California Grocers Association filed federal lawsuits against Long Beach, West Hollywood and Montebello, seeking to declare hazard pay mandated by those cities as invalid and unconstitutional, contending that grocers will not be able to absorb the additional pay without

raising prices, closing stores, reducing hours or laying off employees. A federal judge denied the association's bid to temporarily overturn the Long Beach ordinance.

Los Angeles' chief legislative analyst determined that potential economic impacts of the ordinance include temporary increases of labor costs as a percentage of the company's sales, potential higher prices for consumers, potentially delayed store openings, renovations and wage increases or promotions for employees, potential pressure on struggling stores that could lead to stores closing and reduced hours for some employees.

However, the chief legislative analyst also determined that the higher wages could also benefit other city businesses, as more people would have extra money to buy additional goods. It could also help people pay down their debts and increase their savings.

New Study Says Landslides After Wildfires in Southern California Will Become More Common

[According to a new study published in "Earth's Future,"](#) the journal of *The American Geophysical Union*, post-wildfire landslides are now likely to happen every year in Southern California and the region can expect major landslides every 10 to 13 years. The study explained how climate change making rainfall more intense, major landslides, capable of damaging 40 or more structures, could occur even more frequently.

Jason Kean, a U.S. Geological Survey hydrologist and lead author of the study, described to weather.com that, "this is our attempt to get people thinking about where these hazards are going to be before there's even a fire." He further explained, "by proactively thinking about hazards, you can start to develop more detailed response plans for their inevitability."

The researchers mapped areas where post-wildfire landslides are likely to occur in Southern California, somewhat similar to how the state currently maps earthquake hazards, by using historical data on fire frequency, fire severity and rainfall intensity.

The study said the maps will give emergency managers warnings about areas where landslides could happen. As of now, these emergency managers often have little time between a fire and the first rainstorm to implement response and evacuation plans, according to the study.

Funding Opportunities

Proposition 68 San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program Climate Adaptation Funds

[The Coastal Conservancy](#) is providing this funding with the purpose of awarding competitive grants for projects that plan, develop, and implement climate adaptation and resiliency projects in the San Francisco Bay.

Eligible projects must be consistent with the Conservancy's Strategic Plan and will plan, develop, or implement actions to help natural resources or human communities adapt to the impacts of climate change. Eligible projects should improve a community's ability to adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change; improve and protect coastal and rural economies, agricultural viability, wildlife corridors, or habitat; develop future recreational opportunities; or enhance drought tolerance, landscape resilience, and water retention. Projects that utilize natural infrastructure while providing multiple benefits will be prioritized.

Tidal wetlands restoration projects will not be considered under this round as there are already ongoing funding sources specifically for baylands restoration (see the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority grant opportunities; applications are accepted in the fall yearly). Other sea level rise adaptation projects, including subtidal, intertidal, and upland transition zones will be eligible.

Projects must be one of the following types:

- Project planning and design:
 - Actions that will lead to construction, such as:
 - Environmental review and permitting, and
 - Development of engineered designs
- Project implementation:
 - On-the-ground construction or installation
- Project development:
 - Technical assistance for disadvantaged communities and support for activities that will help identify specific solutions and projects
 - Technical assistance refers to the process of providing necessary education and resources for project scoping and development and project implementation assistance.

Per Proposition 68, a “disadvantaged community” refers to a community with a median household income less than 80 percent of the statewide average.

All Prop 68 funds must be spent consistent with the provisions of the General Obligation Bond Law, including Government Code Section 16727. In general, this means projects must entail the planning, development, construction, or acquisition of capital assets and/or activities that are incidentally but directly related to construction or acquisition, such as planning, design, and engineering. Capital assets are tangible physical property acquisitions or improvements with a useful life of at least 15 years. These grant funds cannot pay for activities that exclusively involve communication, policy development, or government services.

Projects must be located within one of the nine San Francisco Bay Area counties. Total estimated funding amounts to \$5.7 million. The deadline to apply is **January 1, 2022**, and details on how to apply can be found [here](#).

EDA’s 2021 Build to Scale Program (EDA-HDQ-OIE-2021-B2S)

[The Build to Scale Program](#) builds regional economies through scalable startups through the Venture Challenge and Capital Challenge. EDA’s Office of Innovation & Entrepreneurship is committed to furthering technology-based economic development initiatives that accelerate high quality job growth, create more economic opportunities, and support the future of the next generation of industry leading companies.

To advance these goals, EDA awards grants through the Build to Scale Program (formerly the Regional Innovation Strategies Program) for activities designed to develop and support regional innovation initiatives. EDA thereby advances the growth of connected, innovation-centric economies that increase job growth, enable the workforce of tomorrow, enhance global competitiveness, and foster global competitiveness through technology commercialization and

entrepreneurship as described in Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980 (hereafter Section 27).

Organizations who are aiding companies in developing the next generation of technologies are invited to apply for funding. These organizations may be operating initiatives to unlock investment capital across a region or sector, operating programs to accelerate company growth, empowering the next generation of entrepreneurs, and/or enabling technology commercialization.

Applications for the Build to Scale Program are solicited for three separate competitions:

- I. *The Venture Challenge*: invites organizations to submit competitive proposals that seek to support entrepreneurship and accelerate company growth in their community, region, or combination of regions. Competitive proposals will outline how the project will strengthen economic competitiveness through new product innovation or new technology adoption, enhancing research commercialization processes and outcomes, remediating structural barriers that inhibit regional innovation capacity and resilience, and/or leveraging regional competitive strengths to stimulate innovation and job creation.
 - a. The Venture Challenge is a single competition but is comprised of two funding levels:
 - i. *Venture Challenge Build* applicants may not request more than \$750,000 over the three-year period of performance.
 - ii. *Venture Challenge Scale* applicants must request more than \$750,000 and may not request more than \$1.5 million over the three-year period of performance.
- II. *The Capital Challenge*: provides operational support for the formation, launch, or scale of investment funds that seek to invest their capital in scalable startups (i.e., venture funds, seed funds, and gel funds) or to organizations with a goal to expand capital deployment within a community, region, or regional industry (i.e., angel networks or investor training programs). Funding will primarily support operational and programmatic costs and may not be used as investment capital.
- III. *The Industry Challenge*: not included in this NOFO but may return in future notices.

The minimum required match for both the Venture and Capital Challenges is 1:1. Applicants must demonstrate at the time of the application a matching share of at least 50 percent of the total project cost.

The deadline to apply for this funding is **April 29, 2021**. Full details from the EDA regarding this program and how to apply can be found [here](#).

DHS Announces \$180 Million Security Grant Program Open to Nonprofits in California & Nationwide

[The Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\) announced the Fiscal Year 2021 Nonprofit Security Grant Program \(NSGP\)](#) in the amount of \$180,000,000, available nationwide to nonprofits. Of this amount, \$90,000,000 is available to nonprofits located in designated urban areas (NSGP-UA), and \$90,000,000 is available to nonprofits located outside designated urban areas (NSGP-S).

This funding is focused on target hardening activities. The funding can be used for the acquisition and installation of security equipment on real property. Nonprofit organizations that are eligible to submit applications for the FY 2021 NSGP are those organizations that are described under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from tax under Section 501(a) of such code.

To prepare for the FY 2021 NSGP application submission, Cal OES will be conducting webinars to explain the NSGP requirements and assist nonprofit organizations with the application process. Cal OES encourages interested parties to complete a Vulnerability Assessment, as part of the application requirement.

Application documents must be submitted to the following email address:

Nonprofit.Security.Grant@caloes.ca.gov

Application documents are due no later than **Wednesday, April 7, 2021** at 8:00 am (PST).