



## **News from the Emergency Management Committee Chair (7/15/22)**

### **Stunning Spread of BA.5 Shows Why This California COVID Wave is so Different**

[The Los Angeles Times reports](#) with California suffering through another intense coronavirus wave, the stunning proliferation of the BA.5 subvariant is becoming a growing focus of scientific scrutiny, with experts saying it may replicate itself far more effectively than earlier versions of Omicron.

Compared to its ancestors, the latest Omicron subvariant, BA.5, may have an enhanced ability to create a large number of copies of the coronavirus once it gets into human cells, a possible contributing factor for why this summer's Omicron wave has been problematic.

Far and away [the dominant version](#) of the coronavirus circulating nationwide — making up an estimated 65% of new cases over the weeklong period that ended Saturday, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — BA.5 is arguably combining aspects of last summer's Delta variant with older versions of the highly contagious Omicron family, said Dr. Eric Topol, director of the Scripps Research Translational Institute in La Jolla.

“You may remember the term ‘Deltacron’ prematurely used many months ago in the pandemic. But the ability to infect cells for BA.5 is more akin to Delta than the previous Omicron family of variants,” Topol wrote in a [blog post](#).

In many ways, this wave of the pandemic has felt different from other Omicron waves earlier this year. Health experts say the behavior of the ultra-contagious strain shows the need for prudent precautions.

Citing a preprint [report](#) out of Australia, Topol referred to data in a lab study that suggested BA.5 was found to produce far more copies of the coronavirus when compared with an earlier Omicron subvariant, BA.2.

To read more on the findings of the study as well as other opinions from experts, [visit the full article](#).

### **LA County Reports 18,158 New COVID-19 Cases, 39 Deaths Since Saturday**

[Los Angeles Daily News reports](#) Los Angeles County confirmed more than 18,000 new COVID-19 cases since Saturday, the Department of Public Health reported on Monday, July 11, continuing the near-daily stark reminder of the virus's transmissibility as the countywide indoor mask mandate gets closer to being reinstated.

Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer warned during a public briefing last week that a new indoor mask mandate could be implemented by July 29 if the county's numbers continued trending upwards.

The new numbers reported Monday appear to confirm the county's concerns that omicron subvariants [BA.4 and BA.5](#) are fueling a swift rise in cases — compounded by an uptick of in-person gatherings held over the recent Fourth of July holiday weekend.

DPH on Monday reported 18,158 new COVID-19 cases and 39 new deaths since Saturday — bringing the countywide totals since the start of the pandemic to 3,178,242 and 32,451 respectively.

LA county reported an additional 6,416 new cases on Friday, July 8, along with 18 new deaths — the highest single-day death toll since March 30, DPH said.

The numbers reported on Monday are likely [undercounted](#) because of delays in weekend and holiday reporting, the department said. The prevalence of at-home COVID-19 test kits also contributes to the undercount, as those results are rarely reported to DPH.

Still, more than 12.2 million LA County residents were tested for COVID-19 from Saturday to Monday, the county reported, with 23% testing positive.

To read more on the status of LA County's COVID-19 cases, [visit the full article](#).

### **LA County COVID-19 Deaths Rising Fast as Ultra-Contagious BA.5 Fuels Infection Wave**

[The Los Angeles Times reports](#) the number of weekly COVID-19 deaths reported in Los Angeles County has doubled over the last month — the first significant increase in fatalities since the winter surge.

Over the last week, the nation's most populous county tallied roughly 100 COVID-19 deaths, the highest total in three months. A month ago, the county was reporting about 50 deaths a week.

Although the numbers are still a fraction of the peak in the winter, when there were more than 500 COVID-19 deaths a week, they underscore the growing concerns over new super-contagious subvariants that have fueled a new wave of infections.

“There's a lot of misinformation circulating about COVID right now, including that, at this point, it only causes mild illness,” said L.A. County Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer. “Unfortunately, this isn't true.”

For all the observations that Omicron is less likely to cause severe illness than the Delta variant, which was the culprit behind last summer's surge, the coronavirus just this year has already led to three times as many deaths as the county typically recorded in an average pre-pandemic flu season.

So far in 2022, the deaths of 4,390 county residents from COVID-19 have been reported — essentially equal to the typical combined toll of the flu, drug overdoses and motor vehicle accidents over an entire calendar year, Ferrer said.

About 1,500 people in L.A. County died annually from the flu before the pandemic, one person a year from a cold, more than 2,000 a year from accidental drug overdoses and nearly 900 a year from motor vehicle accidents.

In California, an average of 37 COVID-19 deaths have been reported per day over the last week, a rate that's remained relatively steady in the last two months. The state's cumulative pandemic death toll has now surpassed 92,000, [according to data](#) compiled by The Times. That's roughly equivalent to the population of Santa Monica.

L.A. County recorded nearly 12,000 COVID-associated deaths in 2020 and almost 14,500 in 2021.

The number of [coronavirus-positive patients](#) in L.A. County hospitals on any given day has doubled in the last month to nearly 1,200 as of Monday, the highest figure since February. Of them, 115 were in the intensive care unit, an increase of 64% in the last month.

Statewide, the latest census was 4,227, the highest single-day total since late February.

Only about 42% of L.A. County's hospitalized coronavirus-positive patients are admitted specifically for COVID-19 illness — as opposed to incidentally testing positive while being in the hospital for other reasons. But officials have also noted a recent increase in the share of coronavirus-related visits to emergency departments. Two months ago, 5% of emergency room visits were coronavirus-related; now it's close to 10%.

For further details on rising cases in Los Angeles County, [visit the full article](#).

### **Return of Mask Mandate Appears Imminent in LA County. Here's What to Expect**

[NBC Los Angeles reports](#) Los Angeles County is on track to enter the "high" COVID-19 community level as soon as Thursday, in which case an indoor mask mandate would return two weeks later, the public health director said Tuesday.

If the county continues at its current pace, masks could be mandated indoors again by July 29.

The county is in the "medium" COVID level as defined by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which factors in the number of virus cases and hospital admissions.

To reach the "high" category, the county's rate of daily COVID-positive patients admitted to area hospitals would top 10 per 100,000 residents.

As of Tuesday, that rate was at 8.8 per 100,000 residents.

Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer told the Board of Supervisors she expects the county to move into the "high" activity category within days.

A mandatory indoor mask mandate will be imposed if the county remains in the "high" category for two consecutive weeks -- which, under the current pace, means the mandate will take effect by July 29.

"I do recognize that when we return to universal indoor masking to reduce high spread, for many, this will feel like a step backwards," Ferrer said.

But she said universal masking "makes a lot of sense because it helps us to reduce risk."

Masks are already required on all forms of public transportation in LA County and in other indoor spaces, such as health care facilities, correctional facilities and shelters.

For more information on current mask wearing rules, click [here](#).

A universal mandate would spread the requirement to all indoor public spaces, including shared office spaces, manufacturing facilities, retail stores, indoor events, indoor restaurants and bars and schools.

[Recent studies](#) say yes, particularly for people who wear well-fitted and higher-grade masks like N95 or KN95 masks.

### **No Indoor Mask Mandate Planned in Riverside, San Bernardino Counties**

[The Press-Enterprise reports](#) officials in Riverside and San Bernardino counties don't intend to follow Los Angeles County's lead in bringing back a mask-wearing mandate for indoor settings, amid a surging summer wave of coronavirus infections.

"There's been no talk of that," David Wert, a San Bernardino County spokesperson, said Wednesday, July 13. "The practice of the county is not to do local COVID orders, but to default to whatever the state guidance is."

Riverside County public health spokesperson Jose Arballo Jr. said there his county also has no plans to reinstate an indoor mask mandate. Riverside County also continues to rely on state guidelines when it comes to masking, Arballo said.

Since March, the California Department of Public Health has had in place a ["strong recommendation,"](#) though not a requirement, that everyone — regardless of vaccine status — don face coverings in public indoor places such as stores, restaurants, theaters and state and local government offices.

There are no plans, either, to require that riders on Riverside Transit Agency buses put on masks, agency spokesperson Bradley Weaver said. Mask wearing for riders and bus drivers has been optional since spring.

"There has been no discussion about bringing back the mask mandate for our buses, but we will be watching the situation closely and communicating with our customers frequently regarding this issue," Weaver said.

Masks are still required in some indoor locations, such as hospitals and doctor's offices and some individual businesses.

Coronavirus cases have climbed across Southern California through the spring and summer after falling to low levels in late winter, as new exceptionally contagious coronavirus variants have gained a foothold and widely spread infections across the nation.

"We continue to see a rise in cases," Arballo said. "That was expected in part because of the 4th of July."

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lists Riverside and San Bernardino counties in its "medium" community transmission category, while [L.A. County has moved into](#) the "high" transmission category.

Wert and Arballo said there were no plans to bring an indoor mask mandate back to the Inland Empire should Riverside and San Bernardino counties move into the “high” range.

Riverside and San Bernardino counties were listed in the “medium” category Thursday, July 14, because each has been reporting more than 200 new coronavirus cases weekly per 100,000 residents. Hospitalizations will determine whether the counties move to “high” — [if new COVID-19 hospital admissions](#) reach 10 per 100,000 population in a week or if COVID-19-positive patients occupy 10% or more of hospital beds.

[New hospital admissions in each of the inland counties](#) stood at 8.2 per 100,000 and [6.3% of beds were occupied](#) by coronavirus patients, the federal agency’s website shows.

In LA County, hospital admissions hit 10.5 people per 100,000 residents on Thursday.

According to state data, Inland Empire hospitalizations have been rising, though at a slower rate than infections.

The number of people being treated in a hospital for COVID-19-related illness stood at 233 in San Bernardino County and at 242 in Riverside County, as of Wednesday, data show.

That’s the most since late February, when the region was coming out of one of the worst surges of the pandemic, the omicron-fueled winter wave.

### **COVID-19 Cases Shoot Up at Sacramento-Area Hospitals. Here’s What Doctors Say are Behind It**

[The Sacramento Bee reports](#) the number of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 has risen sharply in Sacramento-area hospitals since April, but local doctors say a number of those rushed to their emergency rooms arrived with injuries or ailments completely unrelated to the respiratory illness.

The COVID-19 diagnosis was simply coincidental, a finding that is revealed because all hospital patients are being screened for coronavirus to ensure that, if they have COVID-19, they can be isolated, said Dr. Dean Blumberg, chief of the division of pediatric infectious diseases at UC Davis Health.

Dr. Michael Vollmer of Kaiser Permanente estimated that somewhere between 30% and 50% of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 are likely in this category. The degree of community spread of this disease has soared since mid-April, he said, but many people have no symptoms or mild symptoms — and don’t know they have it.

“The omicron variant has continued to mutate around the world,” said Vollmer, who heads up epidemiology for Kaiser’s Northern California region. “It’s passing from person to person in a setting where there’s immunity either through vaccination or prior infection. The virus is continuing to evolve with us as we evolve immunity to it, and what’s happened since the spring and now into summer is that underneath this sort of persistent community spread, the virus has changed. We now are seeing the subvariants of omicron that are even more transmissible in the face of immunity.”

At Dignity Health hospitals, the COVID-19 positivity rate jumped to 17.5% in June, up from 11% in May, said Dr. Parimal Bharucha, head of the department of pulmonary and critical care for Mercy Medical Group.

It used to be that people who recovered from COVID-19 would have eight to 12 weeks of natural immunity, the physicians said, but the omicron subvariants BA.4 and BA.5 can defeat those checkpoints after four to six weeks.

Patients do appear to have a tougher time shaking these variants, Vollmer said, and are fighting longer-term battles with COVID-19 symptoms. The virus gets into many organs, including the brain, Vollmer said, and scientists are still studying its long-term impact.

The good news is that, if you are fully vaccinated and fully boosted under the guidelines offered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, then you have the lowest risk of developing severe disease, the physicians said.

Blumberg urged everyone to pay attention to CDC recommendations for booster vaccinations because they are so crucial to surviving COVID-19. He recalled thinking he could wait a bit for his second booster, but then he was studying data from the CDC and read that people over age 50 who had received only three doses of vaccine were four times more likely to die if they hadn't received the fourth shot. He went the same day and got it.

The unvaccinated in that age group are 42 times more likely to die than their fully vaccinated peers, Blumberg said, and unvaccinated people 5 and older have six times the risk of dying from COVID-19 than those who have been immunized.

For more tips from doctors in the area, [visit the full article](#).

### **How New COVID Variants Changed What We Know About Surface Transmission**

[The San Francisco Chronicle has created](#) an advice column to help Bay Area residents solve their pandemic and post-pandemic conundrums – personal, practical, or professional.

This edition's fields a question from a group of people who have recently had COVID and are thinking about the ways it is transmitted.

The question was, “how many minutes can a surface such as plastic or glass be infectious in a real-life indoor situation? If we touch someone who has COVID and immediately touch our eye or mouth, can we also get infected? Or is there never enough viral load to cause an infection through surfaces or skin?”

To read the responses as to how transmission of these new variants occur, [visit the full article](#).

### **US Officials Working on a Plan to Allow Second COVID-19 Boosters for All Adults**

[CBS Sacramento reports](#) US health officials are urgently working on a plan to allow second Covid-19 boosters for all adults, a senior White House official confirmed to CNN on Monday.

The US Food and Drug Administration is making it a high priority, the official said.

Second boosters have been [authorized for adults 50 and older](#), as well as some people with weakened immune systems, since late March. But younger adults are eligible for only one booster shot, which was authorized in November. Federal agencies are looking to move quickly on authorizing a second booster for all adults, the source said.

Some experts are concerned that younger adults' immunity may be waning as Covid-19 cases rise with the dominance of [the BA.5 Omicron subvariant](#). Reinfections are more likely with



BA.5 than with any previous variants because of immune escape features, Dr. Eric Topol, a cardiologist and professor of molecular medicine at Scripps Research, said on CNN Monday.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that the BA.4 and BA.5 subvariants constitute more than 70% of new infections in the country. But while these subvariants may partially escape the immunity produced by the vaccine and by prior infection, vaccination still likely protects against severe illness.

It remains unclear how many American adults would get a second booster dose if one is authorized. As of Thursday, about half of Americans 18 and up who were eligible for a first booster had gotten it, according to the CDC. Just over a quarter of eligible adults 50 and over have gotten a second booster.

A [study published in May](#) found that a fourth dose of Moderna or Pfizer/BioNTech's mRNA Covid-19 vaccine provides a "substantial" boost to immunity at similar or even better levels than a third dose.

The study, which was published in the medical journal *The Lancet* and included participants whose [median age was 70.1 years](#), also showed that some people who had higher levels of antibodies before the fourth dose of the Covid-19 vaccine had only "limited" boosting.

Those with a history of Covid-19 infection had a similarly limited response. The authors say this suggests that there may be a ceiling or maximum response that can come with a fourth vaccine dose.

Two [earlier studies](#) out of Israel, conducted among participants age 60 or older, showed that hospitalization and death rates from Covid-19 could be reduced with a fourth vaccine dose given at least four months after the third dose. The reduction in hospitalizations and death persisted over time with this fourth shot.

### **'Flooding May Be Our Only Option': Bay Area Firefighters Struggle Against Fire That's Been Burning for 6 Weeks**

[The San Francisco Chronicle reports](#) eager to extinguish the stubborn and smoky [Marsh Fire](#) burning in Pittsburg and Bay Point for 6½ weeks, firefighters are considering flooding the wetlands area where the blaze continues to burn in decayed vegetation.

Contra Costa County Fire Protection District authorities are working with regulatory agencies to come up with a plan to flood the area, said Steve Hill, a spokesperson for the East Bay agency.

"We are aggressively pursuing a solution that involves flooding the area," he said, acknowledging environmental concerns and the need to win approvals from multiple regulatory agencies. "But flooding may be our only option."

The aptly named fire is burning in a wetland area near Pittsburg and Bay Point waterfront, burning through 500 acres of peat — mossy decomposed vegetation — and brush in an area that's difficult for firefighters to access. Because of the unstable soils, fire trucks and heavy equipment sent into the area would sink and firefighters could fall into holes in the marsh where the fire is burning beneath grass in many locations.

So far, the only way to battle the smoldering blaze has been from the skies, using helicopters from Cal Fire and Pacific Gas and Electric Co. to pour water on the fire. But even that hasn't been very effective.

The fire ignited May 28 in a homeless encampment near Suisun and Solano avenues in Bay Point. It swept through the encampment, injuring no one but grew to about 200 acres before firefighters stopped its forward progress.

Last Saturday, winds picked up and the fire flared, spreading into nearby Pittsburg, threatening overhead PG&E power lines and nearing decommissioned industrial plants, including a former power plant that is owned by GenOn. Firefighters from the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, aided by Cal Fire crews dropping water from helicopters, were able to knock down the flames and stop the fire's spread.

But the fire continues to burn in the peat, sending out clouds of smelly smoke that have prompted air quality advisories from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and Contra Costa Health Services advising residents in Pittsburg, Antioch, Oakley and Brentwood, particularly older adults or those with asthma, lung or heart disease to keep their windows and doors closed, and minimize outdoor activity.

The air district extended its warning through Thursday and said that the clouds of smoke may dissipate during the day when offshore breezes are stronger but be worse as winds die down overnight.

Peat fires are notoriously stubborn, often burning for weeks or months before they burn themselves out — a standard strategy. But given the number of people affected by smoke from the fire, Hill said, that's not acceptable.

So, fire officials, accustomed to fighting flames, are battling bureaucracy, working with the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board and the local mosquito abatement district, and probably others, Hill said.

While details remain to be worked out, water would likely be pumped into the area, possibly from the Delta, using existing infrastructure from an area water district or high-volume pumps borrowed from another fire agency, Hill said.

### **Washburn Fire Moves into Sierra National Forest as Fire Fight Continues in Yosemite**

[\*The Los Angeles Times reports\*](#) the Washburn fire advanced into the Sierra National Forest on Wednesday, prompting further closures as the blaze continued burning in Yosemite National Park.

Hot, dry conditions drove "active to very active fire behavior," including torching and intense fire runs into the crowns of trees on slopes, officials said.

As of Wednesday night, the fire was 4,261 acres and 23% contained, officials said.

With the fire's spread into the Sierra National Forest, authorities have closed Forest Routes 5S43; 5S06, which is also known as Mt. Raymond Road; 5S22; and 5S37, forest officials said. The closure will be effective through Aug. 1.



Crews observed significant fire activity on the blaze's east flank, along the south fork of the Merced River toward Iron Creek, officials said Wednesday night, adding that spot fires were possible north of the river "as the fire backs to the bottom of the slope."

Continued warm and dry conditions over the next 24 hours are expected to fuel "an increase in fire behavior," with the activity extending into the nighttime hours, officials said.

Containment lines are holding well, and crews are working to reinforce and work the lines farther in, said Matt Ahearn, operations section chief for California Interagency Incident Management Team 13.

Additional crews are working outside the fire lines, clearing fuel sources from around cabins to the south of the blaze, Ahearn said.

Officials highlighted a years-long effort to reduce the number of trees, both living and dead, in some areas within Yosemite.

"This never-ending task involves thinning trees with a variety of masticating and chipping equipment, chain saws and through the use of low-intensity ground fire when conditions permit," officials said. "The high-severity fire activity we are currently experiencing on the Washburn fire is the result of fire being fueled by a large, forested area with an extremely concentrated biomass."

The community of Wawona remains under a [mandatory evacuation order](#), and firefighters are confident they can protect the Mariposa Grove, home to more than 500 mature sequoias, including the 3,000-year old Grizzly Giant.

On Wednesday, officials pointed to ongoing fuel reduction efforts in the grove.

Low intensity burning in the area is ultimately beneficial to the trees, which evolved with wildfire and rely on extreme heat to release their seeds.

"The result is that the Mariposa Grove survived, remains in good health and a healthier habitat has been created for local flora and fauna," officials said.

There remains some cause for concern, as recent years have seen large numbers of the ancient trees killed by hot, fast fires fueled by climate change. Last year's KNP Complex and Windy fires in California killed an estimated [3% to 5% of the world's sequoias](#) a year after [the Castle fire](#) killed up to 14% of the population, and firefighters at the Washburn fire have [set up sprinkler systems](#) to help protect the Grizzly Giant and other at-risk trees.

### **Yosemite Wildfire Likely Caused by Humans, Authorities Say**

[Newsweek reports](#) a fire that has been burning in Yosemite National Park since July 7 was caused by human influence, according to the Yosemite superintendent.

Also called the Washburne fire, the blaze now covers an area of over 3,500 acres, and, as of July 12, is 22 percent contained by firefighters. There has been a mandatory evacuation of the Wawona area, with Highway 41 being closed.

At a community meeting on July 11, Yosemite Superintendent Cicely Muldoon said that she thinks the fire occurred due to human actions.

"As you all know there was no lightning on that day, so it is a human start fire," Muldoon said in the meeting in response to a question about the fire's origin. "It's under investigation. That's all I can say about that right now. We're looking at that really hard."

Usually, wildfires naturally start due to a spark, like a lightning strike, igniting fuel on the ground. In the areas of the Washburne fire, there is lots of tree-based fuel like timber and dead trees or the fire on the ground and thick shrubs growing. The [drought](#) and dry weather will have dried this fuel out, making it ideal kindling for a wildfire.

In response, as well as using water and fire retardant, firefighters are starving the fire by preemptively burning this fuel in controlled fires before the unchecked blaze reaches it.

The fire is very close to the Mariposa Grove of over five hundred [Giant Sequoias](#), many of which are centuries old. Firefighters are attempting to protect the ancient trees from the blaze using these preventative burns and have done so for years in preparations for a wildfire near the site.

Some of the sequoias got a little bit charred, with nearby flames reaching up to 70 feet up their trunks.

Threats to nearby communities like Fish Camp are low, according to officials.

Visitors to Yosemite National Park can still enter through any other entrance, bar the southern one near to Wawona, via Highways 140 and 120. There are high levels of smoke from the fire being wafted across the park, however, with various locations being rated as having "very unhealthy" and "hazardous" air quality.

"There's going to be widespread smoke and haze," Bill South, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service office in Hanford, told SFGate. "That will suppress the high temperatures in the Yosemite area, so we're looking at afternoon highs in the high 70s on Monday and in coming days. Smoke will be most prevalent in the afternoon hours. That's when we'll see the worst air quality as well."

### **Exclusive: California Fire Officials and FBI are Targeting Illegal Drones Near Wildfire Emergencies**

[CNN reports](#) just one rogue drone is all it takes to bring the aerial assault on a wildfire to a standstill. So, in a fresh alliance, the Los Angeles County Fire Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Los Angeles field office are working together in a first-of-its-kind drone deterrent program to get them out of the sky.

During a wildfire, firefighters often attack a blaze from the ground and from the sky -- sending in fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters to drop water and fire retardant to impede a fire's progress. If an unauthorized drone flies into an emergency response zone, all that effort must stop.

"The main reason they have to avert those drones is we have no idea what the intention is of the operator," said Capt. David Laub of the Los Angeles County Fire Department, who said they've had cases of drones buzzing just over firefighters' heads, posing myriad hazards to its personnel and aircraft.

Yet as they pause, the fire continues to rage.

"It continues to burn. It continues to get bigger. It threatens people's homes, property, the environment, infrastructure -- all of it," Laub said.

With drones now affordable and readily available at big box stores, officials say unauthorized drones have really become a problem in Southern California -- especially as human-induced climate change is spurring gigantic wildfires capable of scorching through thousands of acres of parched vegetation ripe for burning as the megadrought in the West drags on.

People want to see what these massive fires look like up close, usually not realizing how disruptive their drone can be.

But through this new partnership, the officials say offending drones are identified and located in about 30 seconds of taking to the air.

To read more on this new partnership, [visit the full article.](#)

### **California Announces New Details on Efforts to Promote Nation-Leading Red Flag Laws**

[The Governor's Office of Emergency Services \(Cal OES\) announced](#) \$11 million in new community partnerships to expand outreach and education on the use of Gun Violence Restraining Orders – or “red flag laws” – to families, schools and communities most at risk for gun violence.

“California has set the standard for proven gun safety laws that save lives. Every single day, our laws ensure that gun violence remains the exception, not the rule,” said Governor Gavin Newsom. “Our laws have cut gun deaths by half but we’re not stopping there – we’re connecting with communities across our state to share life-saving tools with the families and people who need them most.”

“California has the country’s toughest gun laws, and they work,” said Mark Ghilarducci, Cal OES Director. “Firearm violence is preventable, not inevitable. Raising public awareness about proactive ways for people to intervene can be crucial for preventing violence before it occurs.”

Announced [earlier this month by Governor Gavin Newsom](#), this 18-month campaign now includes recognized leaders in the gun violence prevention community movement:

- \$5 million to the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence in grants to local community-based domestic violence groups for community outreach.
- \$5 million to Hope and Heal Fund for statewide outreach to communities most at risk of gun violence including education efforts, research and multilingual outreach.
- \$1 million to the San Diego City Attorney’s Office for education and training for city attorney offices and law enforcement groups.

The California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, Hope and Heal Fund and the San Diego City Attorney’s Office will work in tandem to ensure loved ones, teachers, or law enforcement know how to intervene and prevent someone in crisis from accessing firearms.

In the first three years of California’s GVRO law, officials used it to remove guns from 58 people who threatened to commit mass shootings, according to a [study](#) recently released by the Violence Prevention Research Program.

From 2016 to 2020, California courts [issued](#) 3,007 Gun Violence Restraining Orders. In 2020, the state issued 1,284 GVROs, 15-times greater than the 85 issued in 2016. That same year, California's [firearm death rate](#) was 8.5 per 100,000 — the seventh-lowest in the nation, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“Our office is proud to be able to provide training to law enforcement agencies throughout the state on how to obtain Gun Violence Restraining Orders,” said San Diego City Attorney Mara Elliott. “Learning to recognize red flags for potential gun violence is the best way to protect our communities and save lives.”

This law demonstrates the enormous potential to save lives to reduce violence and death by firearms by helping to de-escalate emergency situations. California was the first state in the country to pass legislation that gives family members the option to petition a court for this order.

“This campaign will ensure that survivors and their families know about the tools available to them during a crisis,” said Dr. Aleese Moore-Orbih, Executive Director the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence. “We look forward to the continued collaboration with local and statewide partners so that we can reduce gun violence.”

Last year, the Violence Prevention Research Program at UC Davis Health [released a study](#) highlighting the need for increased public support and awareness about Gun Violence Restraining Orders. They empower loved ones, or law enforcement, to intervene and temporarily prevent someone in crisis from accessing firearms.

“Two-thirds of Californians still don't know about this law, so It is imperative to step up efforts to fully implement this law that has enormous potential to decrease firearm suicides and mass shootings,” said Brian Malte, Executive Director of the Hope and Heal Fund. This law is a critical tool in the toolbelt that gives family members a way to ensure their loved ones don't harm themselves or others.”

[California's gun safety policies save lives](#) and provide a national model for other states to follow. According to the Giffords Law Center, in 2021, California was ranked as the top state in the nation for gun safety. As California strengthened its gun laws, the state saw a 37 percent lower gun death rate than the national average. Meanwhile, other states such as Florida and Texas, with lax gun regulations, saw double-digit increases in the rate of gun deaths. As a result of the actions taken by California, the state has cut its gun death rate in half and Californians are 25 percent [less likely to die in a mass shooting](#) compared to people in other states.

### **ICYMI: Funding Opportunities Ending Soon**

- **California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) Grant Program;** *disadvantaged communities; education; employment, labor & training; health & human services*
  - Funded by: Board of State and Community Corrections
  - Deadline: **Friday, July 15, 2022**
  - Total Estimated Funding: \$53,440,829
  - Full Grant Guidelines: [linked here](#)
- **2022 Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESG);** *housing, community and economic development*
  - Funded by: Department of Housing and Community Development

- Deadline: Tuesday, July 26, 2022
- Total Estimated Funding: \$12.6 million
- **Full Grant Guidelines: [linked here](#)**
- **Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program; *disadvantaged communities; disaster prevention & relief; environment & water***
  - Funded by: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
  - Deadline: Friday, July 29, 2022
  - Total Estimated Funding: Dependent
  - **Full Grant Guidelines: [linked here](#)**

### **2022-23 Domestic Violence Response Team (VA) Program RFP**

[The Governor's Office of Emergency Services](#) has created this program to support communities in building and implementing protocols and practices for a collaborative and coordinated response to incidents of domestic violence.

The Program builds the capacity of communities that demonstrate a need for greater collaboration and coordination between domestic violence service providers and law enforcement.

Applicants must be a governmental or a community-based non-profit organization that employs a Domestic Violence Counselor per Evidence Code § 1037.1(a) (1).

The Program is supported through the Services\*Training\*Officers\*Prosecutors (STOP) Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program.

The deadline to apply for this funding is **Monday, August 15, 2022**. Total estimated funding available is \$500k. To view the full grant guidelines, [click here](#).

### **2022-23 Domestic Violence Assistance (DV) Program RFP**

[The Governor's Office of Emergency Services](#) created the DV Program to provide local assistance for comprehensive support services for existing domestic violence providers throughout California, including emergency shelter to victims/survivors of domestic violence and their children.

Per Penal Code § 132823.15-13823.16, all Subrecipients must provide access to emergency shelter and the supportive services, listed under the Program Components.

Support is also provided for the maintenance and further development of domestic violence services to unserved and underserved populations, including but not limited to, rural areas, non-English speaking individuals, persons of color, and geographical areas without services.

The DV Program provides local assistance for comprehensive support services to existing domestic violence providers throughout California, including emergency shelter to victims/survivors of domestic violence and their children.

Applicants must be a governmental or community-based non-profit organization that currently provides comprehensive support services to victims/survivors of Domestic Violence.

The deadline to apply for this funding is **Friday, August 26, 2022**. Total estimated funding available is \$537,587. To view the full grant guidelines, [click here](#).

## **2022-23 Child Advocacy Center (KC) Program RFP**

[The Governor's Office of Emergency Services](#) created the KC Program for Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) to provide direct victim services to child abuse survivors and their families through a multidisciplinary team approach. These services must include victim-centered, trauma-informed forensic interviews, advocacy, direct or referral to therapy/counseling, and referrals for medical exams.

Eligible Applicants must work in conjunction with a CAC registered under the Children's Advocacy Centers of California (CACC).

To request a match waiver, Applicants must submit the VOCA Match Waiver Request form (Cal OES Form 2-159) with their application. Up to two VOCA fund sources can be entered on one form. An additional VOCA Match Waiver Request form may be necessary when there are more than two VOCA fund sources. All sections of the form must be completed and answers to questions 6 and 7 must be specific and unique to the Applicant and Program.

The deadline to apply for this funding **Friday, August 26, 2022**. Total estimated funding available is \$8,646,426. To view the full grant guidelines, [click here](#).