



## COVID-19 VACCINE TASK FORCE

### COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force Meeting #4

January 27, 2021

10:30AM – 12:00PM

Meeting Minutes and Question and Answer Session

---

### Task Force Committee Members Attendees

#### **Emergency Services**

Vince Pierucci, EMS

Chief Jonathan Stornetta, Fire

Commander Caleb Davis – Law Enforcement

#### **Bioethicist**

Luis Ochoa, MD - *Absent*

#### **Community Health Centers**

Stephen Clarke, MD

#### **Pharmacies**

Maronee Hollister, PharmD

#### **Long Term Care**

Karen Jones, Ombudsman, SLO County

#### **Business Community**

Kristen Yetter, Promega Biosciences

#### **Occupational Health**

Brian Roberts, MD, MedStop

#### **Health Insurers**

Paul Jaconette, CenCal

#### **Education**

Dr. James Brescia, County Office of Education - *Absent*

Courtney Kienow, Cal Poly-Higher Education

#### **Child Care**

Raechelle Bowlay, CCRC

#### **Corrections**

Christy Mulkerin, MD, Jail CMO

#### **Religious Leaders**

Pastor Tim Thuele

Rabbi Janice Mehring

Monsignor Ed Callahan – *Absent*

**Organizations serving racial and ethnic groups**

Erica Heredia-Ruvalcaba, Latinx  
Veronica Avery, NAACP

**Organizations serving people with disabilities**

Diva Johnson, Tri-Counties Regional Center

**Organizations serving people with limited English proficiency**

Irebid Gilbert, Herencia Indigena

**Community Representatives**

Mary Jean Sage, Health Commission  
Betsy Whitaker, Med Anthropologist

**Hospice**

Kim Chartrand, ASPC

**Homeless Serving Organizations**

Janna Nichols

**Voluntary Organizations**

Rick London, United Way

**Behavioral Health**

Jill Bolster-White, Transitions Mental Health Association

**Utilities**

Samantha Caldwell, PG&E Diablo Canyon, Energy  
(Justin Rogers, PG&E Diablo Canyon)  
Bill Robeson, City of Arroyo Grande Water/Wastewater/Trash

**Agriculture**

Brent Burchett, Farm Bureau

**Transportation**

Geoff Straw, SLORTA  
(Tania Arnold, SLORTA)

---

**Welcome**

Jen Miller welcomed task force members, reviewed meeting process, purpose of the task force. Commander Caleb Davis, representing law enforcement, is taking the place of Chief Lewis. A discussion about the proposal to move the meeting to another day and conducting them bi-weekly will occur at the end of a meeting.

**Pandemic Status in SLO County as of 1/25 - Dr. Borenstein**

Our community is beginning to see a decline in daily cases; however, the disease continues to have dramatic impacts. As of today we have had well over 17,000 cases. We are seeing the rates trending downward, and even saw a day with less than 100 new cases. Overall the state ICU capacity is improving. As of Monday (1/25/21), the state lifted the regional stay at home orders statewide based on ICU bed capacity projected to exceed 15% four weeks out. Although we are seeing a drop off in cases, we want to further see a decline in the number of hospitalizations and deaths. Currently, deaths from COVID-19 outpace any other cause of death in our county.

**Vaccine Allocation and Distribution**

This week, we are operating three vaccination sites – SLO, Arroyo Grande (at the high school), and Paso Robles. This week we scheduled 7,000 vaccinations with 5,500 being first doses, and 1,500 being second doses. The SLO site closed Wednesday (and Thursday) due to inclement weather, and damage to the tents. The people who were to be vaccinated at that site have all been notified, and are being rescheduled for next week. We continue to work to get as many of the 75+ population vaccinated; the rate of deaths is by far the highest for the 75+ age group which is why we have moved forward with

vaccinating this age group at this time. As of the end of last week, well over 12,000 first doses were administered by Public Health. The allocation is sporadic, thus the reason we are only scheduling one week out; we do not want to schedule people and then have to cancel due to inadequate supply. We are largely through Phase 1A, and are working in the first portion of Phase 1B. We are anticipating another two to three weeks with this age group. Phase 1B is anticipated to add the 65-74 age group, as well as those in education and childcare, emergency services, and food and agriculture.

### **Vaccine Process Review**

The County opened a third mass vaccination clinic in Arroyo Grande on Monday. Nearly 100 people are activated to make the mass vaccination clinics functional each day; those people include library workers, staff who have been pulled from other departments, volunteers and more. Logistics are challenging and change frequently.

We have needed to stay flexible and make accommodations for this fragile 75+ age group. For example, staff and volunteers at the vaccine sites are now offering in-car vaccinations and observation (for those with mobility issues). The SLO clinic is moving to Cuesta College's Performing Arts Center on Friday to be able to accommodate a higher volume, improve traffic, reduce walking, and mitigate parking issues. (This date was moved up due from Monday Feb. 1, due to the weather issues at the existing site.) Thank you to SLORTA for providing people with free rides to sites.

The Task Force was asked to consider community partnerships, in-reach, and tapping advocates to assist people age 75 and older who may have challenges with technology, transportation, language or other concerns. We recognize this as an equity issue.

The question of surplus doses which was raised last week was re-addressed. This week, an on-call system was instituted for eligible people who have been approved to receive vaccine (e.g., wastewater, homeless or foodbank workers). We are taking names and contact information and will begin working our way down the list once we know how many doses remain at the end of the day. This will ensure that any surplus doses are used go to groups that have been pre-identified as eligible and can be quickly responsive to using all doses at the end of the day.

### **Public Comment Review - Statistics**

Jen Miller reviewed the public comments submitted through the [recoverslo.org](https://forms.emergencyslo.org/Vaccine-Advocacy) Public Comment / Vaccine Advocacy button at <https://forms.emergencyslo.org/Vaccine-Advocacy>.

#### **Public Comment summary 1.18.21 - 1.24.21**

- 52 pages of comments
- 202 unique comments

#### **Vaccine registration and logistics - 67%:**

- (33%) 67 comments or questions regarding the vaccine registration process (many expressing challenges with phone line, asking for appointment confirmation, or asking how to cancel an appointment)
- (18%) 37 comments regarding unclear messaging or general vaccine logistics and/or criticizing the pace of vaccine distribution.
- (16%) 32 individuals explaining a personal situation and asking to be prioritized, or asking when they will be eligible.

#### **Age and underlying conditions - 11%:**

- 6 comments advocating for people over age 65 be vaccinated immediately
- 5 comments advocating to prioritize the elderly with underlying medical conditions

- 11 comments advocating to prioritize the immunocompromised or developmentally delayed.

**Occupation related prioritization – 15%:**

- 9 comments advocating to prioritize veterinarians
- 4 comments advocating to prioritize childcare personnel
- 10 comments advocating to prioritize other job categories (at home caregivers, field techs & IT, tax preparers, real estate appraisers, waste-water technicians, restaurant workers, food pantry workers, COVID vaccination volunteers, teachers)
- 8 letters from organizations advocating to prioritize their staff (Cliffs Hotel, Nipomo Community Presbyterian Church, 5 Cities Christian Women's Food Pantry, 5 Cities Meals on Wheels, Meals that Connect, Estero Bay Kindness Coalition, Atascadero Loaves and Fishes, SLO Superior Court)

**Settings – 2%:**

- 4 comments asking for vaccinations at specific Senior Living locations (The Villages, The Palms, Morro Shores Mobile Park)

**Other – 4%:**

- 1 offer to help provide vaccine or offering locations to administer vaccine.
- 2 technical questions about the vaccine or COVID 19 virus.
- 6 comments offering praise and thanks.

The task force members did not ask to elevate any of the groups who submitted public comments. Preference remains to vaccinate the entire 75+ age group first.

**Vaccine Registration System Discussion**

The current registration process involves opening one week of appointments on Thursday mornings. The number of appointments is dependent upon the number of doses received from the State each week. Current practice is not to schedule farther than one week out rather than have to cancel appointments due to lack of supply. Appointments can be scheduled online or over the phone. The County Phone Assistance Center has tripled in capacity to manage calls in the last few weeks. They have also added more bilingual call staff. Despite improvements, we hear the challenges and frustrations experienced by callers, including not being able to get through, language barriers, and appointments filled within a few hours of the appointments becoming available on Thursdays. Some have difficulty navigating the online system, so the phone system is critical to the process.

The current registration process is competitive. Structurally, this system is challenging for people without internet access, computer literacy or family members that can help them. The alternative system proposed is a lottery registration/booking process in which people who are interested in receiving the vaccine can add their name to a pre-registration list. Each week, the County would randomly select names from the list and those people would be invited to schedule their appointment, either by phone or email. The lottery system could eliminate the competitive, stressful and frustrating process and could make the vaccine registration more equitable.

The Governor's announced on 1/26/21 a new statewide approach to vaccine administration is being developed to simplify and standardize the process. There are still a number of unknowns about this system and whether the MyTurn registration system will be mandatory or not. Discussion followed.

Most task force members expressed support of the County system, and believe it will be preferable over a state system. Dr. Borenstein canvassed the attendees. General consensus of the task force was to proceed as follows:

- To avoid more confusion, wait to change the current system until we understand what the State will mandate.
- If the County can opt out of the State “My Turn” system, implement the lottery system once vaccinations are open to the next age group 65-74.
- Keeping control at the local level will allow for more flexibility

Discussion about vaccinating inmates: Public Health will coordinate with the jail to consider use of end of day left-over doses for the handful of inmates that are in the 65-74 age group, consistent with what is happening at CMC and ASH. Currently there is only one inmate age 75+.

### **Vaccine Communications: Task Force Role – Tara Kennon**

- New information is available on the website including FAQ’s and a new statistics dashboard at <https://www.recover slo.org/en/index.aspx>
- Tara thanked members for sharing talking points and key messages. It has also been helpful to get suggestions from the task force members. We continue to be available to provide presentations to groups as needed.

### **Closing**

Next Meetings

**\*Note\*** we will NOT be changing meetings to Thursday in late February as originally communicated. Too many members were unavailable at the new time and we would like to avoid having substitutions.

- Wednesday, February 10, 2021 from 10:30AM – 12:00PM
- Wednesday, February 24, 2021 from 10:30AM – 12:00PM
- Wednesday, March 10, 2021 from 10:30AM – 12:00PM
- Wednesday, March 24, 2021 from 10:30AM – 12:00PM

Meeting notes, slides, and public comment form available at <https://www.recover slo.org/en/slo-county-vaccine-taskforce.aspx>

Adjourned at 11:48 AM

### **Questions & Answers**

#### **Q&A about the Governor’s new Statewide Approach to Vaccines**

Q. Kris Yetter: I understand that the State will hold off supply for about 3 weeks to implement new system: Governor Announces New Statewide Approach to Vaccinations:

On Jan. 25, Gov. Newsom announced a unified statewide approach to vaccination administration and management intended to simplify and standardize the process. CHHS issued a media statement affirming the state’s new approach and reiterating the need for a greater and more consistent vaccine supply from the federal government. Details of the state’s new approach include:

- A single statewide standard for vaccine eligibility that will continue to vaccinate people 65 and over along with health care workers, and begin to prioritize emergency services, food and agricultural workers, and teachers and school staff
  - A unified statewide network to align the health care system, providers, and counties to ensure equitable and efficient vaccine distribution
  - A reallocation of vaccines from providers that have not used at least 65% of their available

The announcement also included notice of a statewide data platform MyTurn that helps consumers sign up for and schedule vaccinations when it is their turn. The platform will also help certain providers automatically share data on vaccines received and administered to reduce data reporting lag time.

There is no expectation of a pause in allocation of additional vaccine.

Q. Christy Mulkerin, SLO County Jail - Jen / Dr. Borenstein, would you mind sharing more about how the on-call system works so we can pass along to people who ask?

A. We have compiled a master list of people eligible for vaccine. These people are on “standby” and await an email or a text at the end of the day if there are extra doses available. They must respond that they are able to appear at the vaccine clinic within 20 minutes of the notice that there is a dose available for them.

Q. Tim, Grace Central Coast - 500 anxious people today because of the rain cancellation! What will happen to those appointments?

A. The cancelled appts were rescheduled for next week

Q. Jill Bolster-White, TMHA - Is there an option for weekend vaccine clinics?

A. This is under consideration but is not moving forward at this time based on the staffing available.

#### **Considerations about the local vaccine registration system and potential lottery option**

Q. Elizabeth (Betsy) Whitaker, PhD, community representative - A couple of weeks ago, someone brought up the idea of allocating a portion of the supply to the occupational versus age groups. This could work with a dual lottery system for the two groups. In any case, it would make it easier to divide up available doses. People in congregate settings could be immunized on a separate track.

A. The lottery system would allow us to keep multiple lists, if needed. However, it appears the State is moving towards an age-based system and away from occupation based.

Q. Diva Johnson, Tri-Counties Regional Center - Is there a way to carve out a portion of the appointments as phone only so that people without technology are not beat out by those who can get online?

A. Yes, this is part of our current process.

Q. Maronee Hollister, PharmD, Pharmacies - Will a state system allow county jumping for vaccines?

A. At this time, we do not have any details about what the State system will allow.

Q. Diva Johnson, TCRC - Lottery sounds good but will be a disadvantage to those without access to technology

A. The lottery system would include a phone-only option. People would be able to call to have their name put on the list.

Q. Kris Yetter - I would support waiting on changing our system until we understand what the State will mandate.

Q. Maronee Hollister, PharmD - pharmacies doing vaccinations may want to continue as they already operate with vaccines.

- A. We expect the State will advise if and when current processes change.
- Q. Tim, Grace Central Coast - How many in the 65-74 age group?
- A. 65-74 age group in SLO County is 38,000
- Q. Sophia - Do you have any information related to the state giving vaccines directly to primary care offices or clinics to help with the vaccine distribution?
- A. The current process is that the State sends allocation to the local health department who then reallocates vaccine to the primary care offices or clinics. We are not aware of any changes to this process.
- Q. Irebid Gilbert - Can Public Health make a video tutorial walking people step by step on how to register for the vaccine? We can increase accessibility to others by doing a voice over in Spanish and Mixteco. This will be easier for advocates to follow as well.
- A. Thank you. We will follow up with you about this! We are sharing your comments with our communications team.
- Q. Rabbi Janice Mehring - At the present pace, do you have enough volunteers to administer vaccines?
- A. We are scheduling volunteers at all 3 vaccination sites. We can always use more, especially with the expectation that we will be needing support for the foreseeable future and expect some attrition.
- Q. Rabbi Janice Mehring - I have heard retired MDs having difficulty with signing up to be vaccinators. I have referred them to links on recoverslo.com
- A. Thank you. Please send any interested volunteers to [SLOMRC@gmail.com](mailto:SLOMRC@gmail.com). This contact information is also on the website. The volunteer coordinator will respond to all interested volunteers and begin the process.
- Q. Irebid Gilbert, Herencia Indigena - There was an ask in the farmworker meeting yesterday. Is there a way to make an exception to vaccinate households with folks who are 75+? The thought process is that there are many families living under one household.
- A. Unfortunately, we can only vaccinate those 75+ at this time. We understand that several families living together increases risk, but we do not have enough vaccine at this time to accommodate others within the household that are not above age 75.

\*\*\*