



CALIFORNIA SMARTER



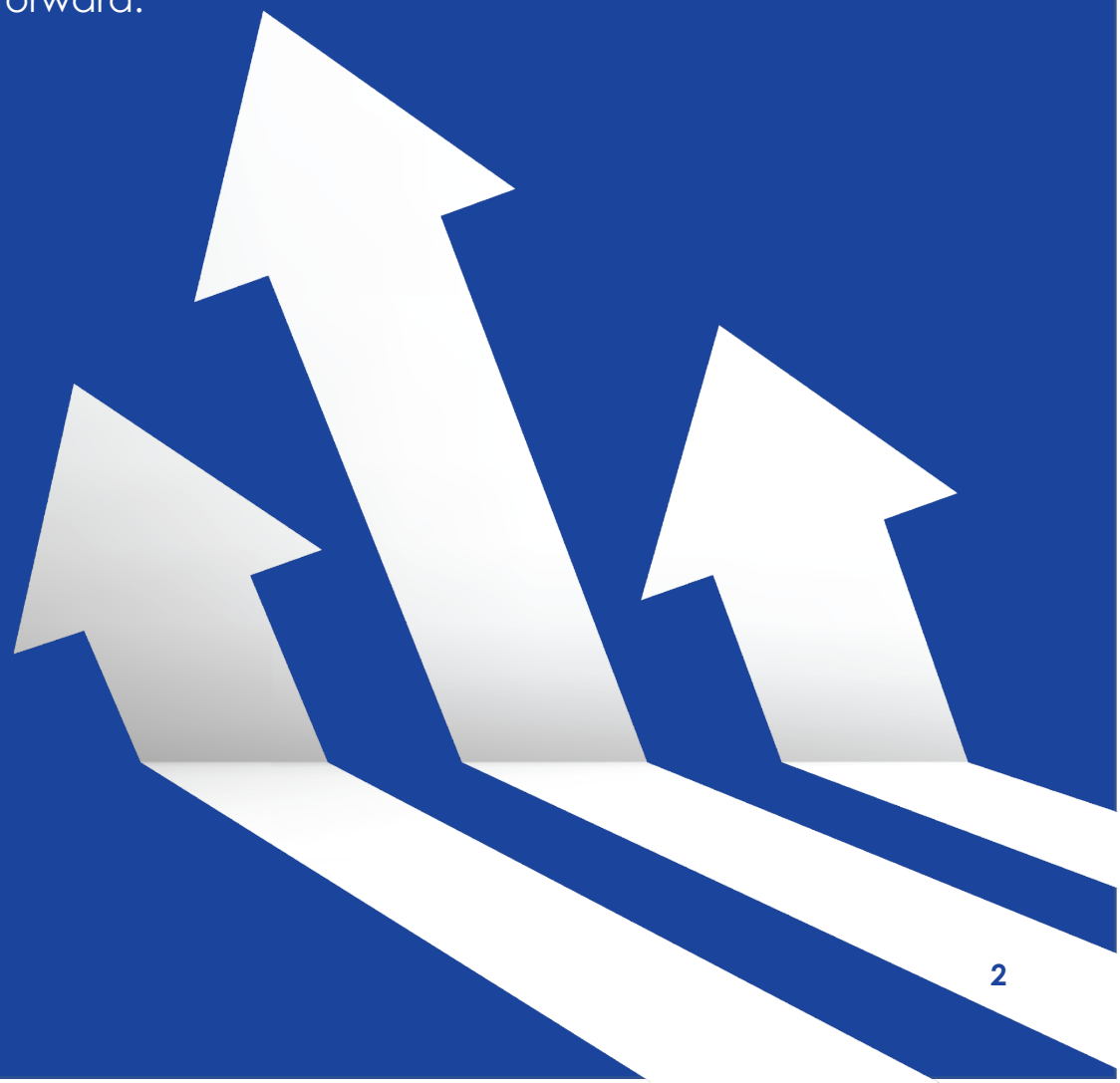
Progress Update

October, 2022

Background

In February the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) released the *California SMARTER Plan: The Next Phase of California's COVID-19 Response* to guide the state's work on the next phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The SMARTER Plan looks at where the state has been, draws on lessons learned from our collective experiences, and lays out a clear path for how California will remain prepared for what COVID-19 might bring next. With Governor Newsom set to lift the State of Emergency in early 2023, this update provides information on California's progress to date and how we move forward. California has always been a state that learns and innovates – it is in our DNA and will guide us moving forward.



Components

California's work is predicated on our individual, smarter actions that will collectively yield better outcomes for our neighborhoods, communities, and the state. Foundational to this plan are the following components:

S

Shots - Vaccines are the most powerful weapon against hospitalization and serious illness.

M

Masks - Properly worn masks with good filtration help slow the spread of COVID-19 or other respiratory viruses.

A

Awareness - We will continue to stay aware of how COVID-19 is spreading, closely track evolving variants, communicate clearly how people should protect themselves, and coordinate our state and local government response.

R

Readiness – COVID-19 isn't going away, and we need to be ready with the tools, resources and supplies we will need to quickly respond and keep the health care system well prepared.

T

Testing - Getting the right type of tests – PCR or antigen – to where they are needed most. Testing will help California minimize the spread of COVID-19.

E

Education - California will continue to work to keep schools open and children safely in classrooms for in-person instruction.

R

Rx - Evolving and improving treatments will become increasingly available and critical as a tool to save lives.

These SMARTER steps are a simple and clear tool for Californians to use as we collectively continue to navigate the next phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each of us has a role to play, read the SMARTER Steps One-Pager ([English](#), [Arabic](#), [Armenian](#), [Chinese](#), [Hmong](#), [Khmer](#), [Korean](#), [Punjabi](#), [Russian](#), [Spanish](#), [Tagalog](#), [Thai](#), and [Vietnamese](#)).

Progress

The SMARTER Plan has guided our work since February in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it now will guide our work as part of this next phase. Here are a few key updates on our progress:

SHOTS – CDPH continues to estimate capacity to be at least 200,000 vaccinations per day, and is leveraging community partnerships, along with the newly established Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications, to provide trainings, education, and events in community to highlight the benefits of vaccines and address misinformation. Over 81 million vaccines have been administered in California, with 85% of the population receiving at least one dose. There have been over 2 million bivalent doses reported to the state – 65% of all doses have been administered to people 50 years or older, 68% of doses have been given by a Pharmacy. 89% of bivalent booster recipients have already received 1 or more boosters; for 11% of bivalent booster recipients, the bivalent represents their first booster. CDPH continues to collaborate with long-term care facilities and local pharmacies to ensure the most vulnerable and high-risk Californians have access to vaccine.





MASKS – CDPH released [updated guidance](#) in September for the use of face masks, using the federal [community COVID-19 levels](#) to inform statewide masking recommendations in the general community and recommendations and requirements in shelters and incarcerated settings. CDPH plans to continue mask requirements in health care settings and long-term care and adult and senior care facilities throughout the winter. The state has already distributed over a billion units of personal protective equipment throughout California, and the remaining stockpile continues to be maintained and commercial supply chain monitored to ensure access to well fitted and well filtered respirators and masks, including surgical masks, N95s, and KN95s in both adult and children's sizes.

AWARENESS – CDPH is maintaining the COVID-19 Assessment and Action Unit and expanding its applicability to other respiratory viruses and emerging infectious disease threats. The California COVID-19 Assessment Tool, or [CalCAT](#), has been updated to include flu projections as part of the new California Communicable Diseases Assessment Tool. CDPH continues to reach out to priority wastewater surveillance sites to increase the network of coverage in California and continues to expand laboratory capacity to conduct increased wastewater testing. Additionally, the California Collaborative for Pandemic Readiness and Recovery Research (CPR3), in partnership with the University of California, launched in September. Now under the Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications, the Vaccinate All 58 team continues to work on extending the California COVID-19 Community Health Project (CCHP) 3.0 community-based organization network and is working closely with the COVID-19 Workplace Outreach Project (CWOP) under the Department of Industrial Relations. This includes existing organizations and new partners that will work on vaccine outreach and education.

READINESS - CDPH issued an allocation methodology in June to local health jurisdictions on the availability of ongoing (\$200 million) in state funding to build local capacity, this is on top of the \$100 million available to build up state capacity. The state is continuing to monitor hospital capacity and has seven staffing contracts on ready. CDPH and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) are working together to develop additional training opportunities around infection control within long-term care facilities. Finally, the Indoor Air Quality Task Force kickoff meeting will occur at the end of October.

TESTING – CDPH updated several [state public health officer orders](#) to remove requirements for screening testing of unvaccinated workers for COVID-19. [Testing Guidance](#) was also updated in September to share that diagnostic screening testing is no longer recommended in general community settings. CDPH continues to encourage high-risk settings to maintain testing capacity to perform diagnostic screening testing during outbreaks, and in the event, it is required again at a future date. CDPH has completed the distribution of 8.4 million over-the-counter antigen tests for end of school year and summer testing, and an additional 10.6 million for the return from summer break testing. CDPH continues to work with local health jurisdictions to allocate antigen tests for individuals in high-risk settings.





EDUCATION – CDPH provides [COVID-19 mitigation guidance](#) and resources supporting safe in-person instruction in all of California's 10,000 K-12 schools. More than 3.5 million children under age 18 years have received the COVID-19 primary series vaccine, and CDPH continues to offer schools with [turnkey mobile vaccination services](#). Guidance for the 2022-23 school year emphasizes the ongoing importance of testing and is backed with support for schools to receive [direct access to no cost, over the counter \(OTC\) antigen tests](#), in addition to support for on-site professional testing. Preparations are underway for additional antigen tests to be made available to schools for return-from-break testing during upcoming Thanksgiving and Winter Holiday breaks. Optimizing indoor air quality remains critical and through the California Energy Commission, schools in underserved communities can access [funding to upgrade HVAC systems](#). Additionally, California is working to sustain the integral relationship between education and health communities and address public health topics beyond mitigating COVID-19 transmission, foremost among which is the ongoing youth mental and behavioral health crisis. CDPH is working with [Department of Health Care Services](#), the [Children & Youth Behavioral Health Initiative](#) and the [California Healthy Minds, Thriving Kids Project](#) to bring resources and guidance to schools on topics related to mental health.

Rx – CDPH leveraged the over 140 Optum Serve testing sites in June 2022 to provide telehealth assessment and on-site dispensing of therapeutics to expand access. Additionally, over 400 CDPH community-based testing partners have changed their automated positive results messaging to include the state's telehealth phone number and website to provide treatment. CDPH will soon be issuing \$59 million in grants to safety net systems, including Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC); community clinics, rural health clinics, free clinics; Indian Health Service (his)/Tribal Health Clinics; and clinics operated by county or city health systems or public health systems to increase access and timeliness of treatment for COVID-19.

FUTURE

As we have learned throughout the pandemic, each surge and each variant bring with it unique characteristics relative to our neighborhoods and communities' specific conditions (e.g., level of immunity). Therefore, California will continue to evaluate the data quickly and nimbly to determine how to best handle future changes in the behavior of the virus. The SMARTER Plan will continue to guide the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, maintains the operational readiness and preparedness to continue protecting people from COVID-19, and lays the foundation for our response to future outbreaks of other infectious diseases. California has done what it takes to save lives throughout this pandemic. We have invested where necessary to build up the infrastructure and processes needed to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on our communities. These pillars will be the foundation of our preparedness going forward.

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