

PROMOTING A  
HEALTHY AND  
SUPPORTIVE  
SCHOOL  
ENVIROMENT

Newsletter

Issue 2

January 2023

# SACRAMENTO COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH FOR SCHOOLS



## THE TRIPLE THREAT: RSV, FLU, & COVID-19 THIS WINTER

This winter, there has been concern about the convergence of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), flu, and COVID-19, a phenomenon some have termed a “triple threat” or “tripledeemic”. All three viruses cause respiratory illness with the potential to lead to serious illness, but there are actions we can all take to decrease the likelihood of getting or spreading these viruses.

RSV and flu normally surge each winter. This season, California experienced more cases earlier in the season and more severe illness, especially among younger (under 5) and older (65+) residents. After several months of declining COVID-19 rates, Sacramento County’s increased in recent months. The county’s [CDC COVID-19 Community Level](#) increased from Low to Medium in early December.

It's not too late to receive the flu vaccine, which can reduce illnesses, doctor visits, and missed school due to flu. Students and staff who are ill should stay home until symptoms have improved. This includes waiting until 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Dr. Olivia Kasirye, Sacramento County Public Health Officer, reminds residents, “It is important to remember the tools we have to stay healthy and safe. Updated COVID-19 boosters and flu shots help provide essential protection. Consider wearing a mask in indoor public places and wash your hands frequently. If you’re sick, whether it’s with COVID-19 or something else, stay home so you don’t spread it to others.”

## HEALTH OBSERVANCES

### JANUARY

[National Blood Donor Month](#)

[Self-Love Month](#) (as in Self-Care!)

[No Name-Calling Week](#) (16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>)

### FEBRUARY

[Marijuana Awareness Month](#)

[Children’s Dental Health Month](#)

[Global School Play Day](#) (1<sup>st</sup>)

[Time to Talk Day](#) (6<sup>th</sup>) ([Here’s How](#))

### MARCH

[HPV Awareness Day](#) (4<sup>th</sup>)

[Poison Prevention Week](#) (12<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>)

[Take A Walk In The Park Day](#) (30<sup>th</sup>)

## In this Issue

Triple Threat	1
Health Observances	1
New Community Nursing	2
Immunization Updates	2
Schools Team Webpage	3
What is Public Health	3

## SACRAMENTO COUNTY'S NEW COMMUNITY NURSING PROGRAM: Providing In-Home and Support Services to Individuals and Families Who Need Them

Sacramento County Public Health is implementing a new Public Health nursing intervention to provide outreach, client advocacy and professional case management to children and families as well as individuals experiencing homelessness. Public Health Nurses (PHNs) will provide education about illness, disease prevention, safe health practices, and how to obtain health care services and other resources. PHNs will work with clients to increase connections to primary care, behavioral health services, specialty health services, and dental health services. In addition, prevention services such as immunizations and health screenings will be offered.

Strengthening connections between home visiting networks and schools can leverage the respective strengths of these fields to improve referrals for families. Both the education system and Public Health aim to improve child and family well-being, partly through referrals to necessary community services. When home visiting programs and school systems work together, families are more likely to have their needs identified and obtain successful referrals to community-based services.

Eligible families and individuals include families that are unhoused, are pregnant with health issues/complications, have children with medical conditions, or developmental delays, or are at risk families that are high utilizers of the medical system and/or have barriers to accessing care. If you would like to refer a family to the community nursing program you can get more information and the referral form [here](#).

## IMMUNIZATION UPDATES

### Reporting and Training Opportunities

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) website now offers [free online training](#) for schools TK–12th grades. These interactive modules are designed to support your efforts in implementing school immunization requirements.

The [immunization reporting site](#) is now open and will close January 31, 2023. Early reporting is always encouraged! The CDPH [website](#) also offers training regarding immunization reporting for staff of TK/Kindergarten, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade, and Pre-Kindergarten (Child Care) facilities. Sacramento County Immunization Assistance Program staff can offer additional training and answer questions. Please email [immunize@sacounty.net](mailto:immunize@sacounty.net) or call (916) 875- 7468 for assistance.

### Medical Exemptions

[CAIR -ME](#) is the system used by MD/DOs in California to write medical exemptions for students. [Instructions to Request a Medical Exemption](#) details the process to obtain a medical exemption. All new medical exemptions must go through this system. In addition, medical exemptions written by [disciplined physicians are revoked](#). Students must either receive immunizations or receive a valid medical exemption through CAIR-ME.

### Sacramento County Immunization Assistance Program Website

Sacramento County Immunization Assistance Program website has resources for schools and families. The website is continuously updated and can be found [here](#).



## THE SCPH SCHOOLS TEAM HAS A (RELATIVELY) NEW WEBPAGE

Earlier this school year, the SCPH Schools Team launched a new webpage as part of our efforts to broaden our focus beyond COVID-19.

You will still find guidance and resources on COVID-19, but we've also included information and links for our public health programs that serve schools, school-aged children, and/or their families.

You will find information on communicable disease control, immunizations, obesity prevention, oral health, sexual health, mental health, and tobacco education and learn how to get in touch with those programs. You can also [message the SCPH Schools Team](#) for an e-mail introduction.

Visit our new page at [SCPHschools.sacounty.gov](https://scphschools.sacounty.gov).



## SO, WHAT IS PUBLIC HEALTH ANYWAY?

As we step into the New Year, we save some space in our *Sacramento County Public Health for Schools* Newsletter for getting back to public health basics. In the last issue, we expanded our content and shared information on many of Sacramento County Public Health programs that collaborate or would like to collaborate with schools in Sacramento County. However, as we continue to move past the headlines of COVID-19, MPX, Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and Influenza, we take a moment to define public health and how it is found in our local community.

Broadly, public health focuses on promoting and protecting the health of people and the communities where we live, learn, work and play. Contrary to visiting a doctor office or urgent care, those who work in public health try to prevent individuals from becoming sick or injured before it happens. Public health includes all of the organized and holistic efforts to improve policy, education and access to make the healthiest choice the easiest choice for everyone.

Examples of public health in the community include:

- Faith based sites hosting COVID-19 vaccination and testing clinics.
- Managers of local food establishments enforcing food safety regulations with their staff.
- Community based organizations providing afterschool programs with healthy eating options and other educational opportunities.
- City and County planners creating a safe environment that encourages daily physical activity.
- Credentialed school nurses, teachers, and staff serving as health advocates by providing health-related interventions, assessments, screenings, education, procedures, and referrals.

All of these efforts play different roles in improving the health of the community.