

# County of Santa Clara

## Public Health Department



Health Officer  
976 Lenzen Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
San José, CA 95126  
408.792.5040

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**DATE:** November 2, 2021

**TO:** Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Sara H. Cody, MD, Health Officer and Public Health Director

**SUBJECT: OFF AGENDA REPORT REGARDING COUNTY VACCINATION DATA**

At the October 5, 2021 Board of Supervisors meeting (Item No. 10), Supervisor Joe Simitian requested an off agenda report relating to clarification of the percentages of County residents who are vaccinated by city versus Countywide, and population denominators used to compile that data. This report provides the requested information.

There are multiple data sources that can be used to obtain population estimates for the county, including from the U.S. Census, the American Community Survey (ACS), and the CA Department of Finance (DoF). Since the start of the pandemic, the Public Health Department had been using population estimates from the DoF whenever we are looking at populations at the countywide level and using population estimates from the ACS when we are looking at population estimates at sub-county levels such as by city, zip code, or census tract. When selecting the DoF as our data source for countywide population estimates, our Public Health Department was aligning with the data source that the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) uses when reporting COVID and other infectious disease data at the state and county level. As the data needs for our local COVID response work evolved, the need to track data at the sub-county level became increasingly important. However, the DoF does not provide population estimates at the sub-county level, so we needed to use the ACS as our source for population estimates to track and monitor data at the city, zip code, and census tract level. CDPH is also using the ACS data for the zip code level COVID data reports. For these reasons, the data source for countywide population estimates is different from that used at the sub-county level. Using different data sources for these different scenarios is why you will see differences in population counts and metrics that use population counts when comparing data between the county overall with data from sub-county levels.

Board of Supervisors: Mike Wasserman, Cindy Chavez, Otto Lee, Susan Ellenberg, S. Joseph Simitian  
County Executive: Jeffrey V. Smith

Given the increasing importance and attention to population size estimates, the Public Health Department and the Emergency Operations Center recently reviewed all of the options for denominators and decided to transition all of our county-level reporting to using the ACS population estimates, so that the same data source will be used across all reports and metrics. Although the ACS has some limitations, as do all sources for population estimates, we are confident that this transition will positively impact our ability to provide accurate and consistent data to the residents of Santa Clara County. We expect this transition to be finalized by the end of November.

2020 Census (Decennial) data are not expected to be available until late 2022, the only 2020 Census dataset currently available is the 2020 Census State Redistricting Data (PL 94-171) Summary File, which is not comprehensive enough to meet our needs.

c: Jeffrey V. Smith, County Executive  
James R. Williams, County Counsel  
Tiffany Lennear, Acting Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
Chiefs of Staff, Board of Supervisors

