

# County of Santa Clara

Office of the County Executive

70 W. Hedding Street, East Wing, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
San Jose, California 95110



November 10, 2021

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors  
Jeffrey V. Smith, M.D., J.D., County Executive

FROM: Ky Le, Deputy County Executive  
Nick Birchard, Deputy Chief Probation Officer  
David Sepulveda, Assistant Sheriff  
Eureka C. Daye, PhD., MPH, MA, CCHP, Director, Custody Health Services  
Vit Kraushaar, MD, MPH, Assistant Public Health Officer

DocuSigned by:  
  
11/10/2021

SUBJECT: Physical Contact and Close Contact During Visitation and Programs

This report responds to requests for information during the Board of Supervisors meeting on September 28, 2021 (Item No. 13) and the Public Safety and Justice Committee meeting on August 5, 2021 (Item No. 4) by:

- a. Summarizing visitation policies of the four correctional / detention facilities; and,
- b. Describing why physical contact and close contact (collectively, "close contact") between visitors and adults or youth during visitation or programs continues to be temporarily suspended.

**1) Adult Facilities.** Prior to the pandemic, the County only allowed close contact between visitors and adults who were housed in minimum security at the Elmwood Complex for Men and Women (Elmwood). For medium security adults at Elmwood and individuals housed at Main Jail, face-to-face in-person visits were conducted through glass partitions. To decrease the risk of transmission during the pandemic, the County reduced hourly visitation capacity at Main Jail and for medium security adults at Elmwood. In June of 2021, both facilities returned to normal visiting capacity for these groups. For minimum security adults, visits were moved to outdoor settings with social distancing enforced. In addition, prior to the pandemic, the County offered the PACT parenting program at the Elmwood Facility. The program included close contact between the adults and their children. This type of parenting program is currently part of an active solicitation. A new contract should be in place by Spring 2022. The new program will be known as the Families Coming Together parenting program.

**2) Youth Facilities.** Prior to the pandemic, the County allowed close contact between visitors and youth at both Juvenile Hall and at the William F. James Ranch (James Ranch). Currently, all visitation occurs either outdoors or in a well-ventilated gymnasium with all participants wearing face coverings and remaining at

least six feet apart. In addition, prior to the pandemic, youth occasionally had close contact with family members or other participants of group counseling sessions. Currently, all counseling sessions are conducted remotely or with face coverings and social distancing.

**3) Restoring Close Contact for Visitation and Programs.** From the onset of the pandemic, quarantine housing was established and in August 2020, an interdepartmental working group was established to reduce and prevent transmission of COVID-19 in the four correctional facilities. The working group established measures such as daily rapid antigen testing at the adult facilities, using risk management units to quarantine newly booked persons, surveillance testing for adults and youth, and vaccination programs for adults and youth. The measures kept transmissions low since active cases peaked on January 11, 2021, and enabled the County to gradually restore almost all in-person services for youth and adults.

Despite these successes, the working group recommends taking a cautious approach to restoring close contact as part of eligible visitation and support programs. The working group is concerned about another winter surge. Over the last two weeks of October, there has been a gradual increase in the 7-day rolling average of cases countywide. Among adults in custody there was a sharp uptick in active cases starting on October 15, 2021; on November 9, 2021, there were 100 active cases. Vaccination rates are still below 60% for adults and below 70% for youth. In addition, the “barracks and dormitory style” housing at Elmwood leaves the adults more susceptible to outbreaks. Finally, staff are concerned about waning immunity among vaccinated adults, youth and staff; Custody Health Services is working to deploy vaccine boosters as quickly as possible, and boosters are available for all County staff working in the four correctional facilities. The working group meets weekly and will periodically reassess the appropriateness of restoring close contact as part of visitation and programs.

CC: Chief Board Aides  
Laurie Smith, Sheriff, County of Santa Clara  
Miguel Márquez, Chief Operating Officer  
James Williams, County Counsel  
Tiffany Lennear, Acting Clerk of the Board  
Deputy County Executives  
Rene Santiago, Director Santa Clara Valley Health and Hospital System  
Sara Cody, M.D., Director, Public Health Department and Public Health Officer  
Laura Garnette, Chief Probation Officer