

County of Santa Clara

Office of the County Executive

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DATE: March 7, 2022

TO: Supervisor Joe Simitian, Chairperson, Health and Hospital Committee
Supervisor Otto Lee, Vice Chairperson, Health and Hospital Committee

FROM: Jeffrey V. Smith, M.D., J.D., County Executive

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Antigen Test Update

At the February 23, 2022 Health and Hospital Committee meeting (Item No. 6), Supervisor Simitian requested an off-agenda report relating to COVID-19 antigen test distribution to the public. This report responds to that request.

Last week, Administration purchased and received an additional 105,480 rapid, at-home antigen tests from iHealth. The County's prior purchase of iHealth antigen tests was in the amount of 639,120; thus, the total number of iHealth antigen tests purchased to date by the County is 744,600. In addition, the County also previously received—and has almost completely distributed—100,000 Flowflex tests donated by Stanford.

The County's efforts have resulted in just over 700,000 antigen tests being distributed throughout the County in less than four weeks. Distribution from the small amount remaining from the originally purchased iHealth stock continues, including through door-to-door outreach by the Community Health and Business Engagement Team (CHBET), Public Health Department, mobile testing sites, and through existing partnerships to reach IHSS workers and childcare workers.

Much of the County's antigen test distribution occurred at the end of January through the beginning of February when the supply of antigen tests was more limited. Since then, the availability of antigen tests has increased significantly while demand has declined alongside the COVID-19 case rate decline from the peak of the Omicron surge.

Where and how residents can obtain antigen tests free of charge has expanded in several ways since the last report to the Board of Supervisors:

- Many health insurers are now responding to the Federal Government mandate that health insurers cover the cost of up to eight at-home COVID-19 tests per person per month by partnering with retail pharmacies so at-home antigen tests can be picked up at a pharmacy without out-of-pocket costs or requiring reimbursement paperwork. All three of the

County's insurance carriers—Kaiser, HealthNet, and Valley Health Plan—currently offer options to pick-up antigen tests from retail pharmacies.

- The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is allocating at-home antigen tests to the County for distribution through the County's Better Health Pharmacy.
- Just last week, the Federal Government announced an expansion of the program to mail four free at-home COVID-19 tests to each household through www.covidtest.gov. Residents can now request an additional set of four free tests. This means that households can now receive a total of eight free at-home tests per household by mail at their home address.
- The Santa Clara County Library District, the Santa Clara City Library, and the Sunnyvale Library are planning to distribute at-home antigen tests via their bookmobiles and homebound delivery service. Bookmobiles provide direct services to underserved communities, including to some geographic areas that reported difficulty requesting tests from www.covidtest.gov because of issues verifying home residence addresses and multi-family housing.

As COVID-19 antigen tests remain a commodity with a short-shelf life (iHealth tests currently have an expiration date six months out from manufacture per the Federal Drug Administration), County Administration is closely monitoring supplies and remains in close contact with the vendor's representative. We anticipate being able to act swiftly, should COVID-19 case rates rise suddenly and unexpectedly, or if the COVID-19 at-home antigen test supply chain begins to tighten.

Until such point, Administration plans to continue distributing at-home antigen tests through existing partnerships. Should new opportunities for distribution or new needs arise, the County is in a position to quickly respond with the current supply of at-home antigen tests and with the ability to purchase additional tests, if needed.

An interactive map displaying where and how many tests have been distributed is in production to increase transparency. The map can be accessed here:

https://app.powerbigov.us/links/LF-YVTEDsa?ctid=0ac3202f-c3e9-4f56-830d-017d09d16b3f&pbi_source=linkShare&bookmarkGuid=49abff87-48b6-4607-8549-fa2ab06302e7

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