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Riverside County health officials continue to urge residents to get tested for COVID-19

Higher testing rate will help county move into red tier

Active coronavirus cases have been declining in Riverside County for weeks. Riverside County currently meets one of the state's metrics to move into the red tier, however, both the red tier's metrics for adjusted case rate and positivity rate must be met to move forward.

Riverside County public health officials remind residents that getting tested for coronavirus helps slow the spread of the disease, and may also help meet the red tier metric for adjusted case rate.

"With the recent focus on coronavirus vaccination, it is not surprising the rate for COVID-19 testing among Riverside County residents has dropped significantly over the past few months," said Board Chair Karen Spiegel, Second District Supervisor. "We want to keep moving forward in reopening and ask residents to continue to do their part by getting tested, wearing a mask and socially distance."

PCR swab tests for active infections slow the spread of the disease by identifying infected individuals who can then be isolated as well as their close contacts. This process disrupts the virus and slows its spread.

"We're not at the point where enough people are vaccinated to just stop testing," said Dr. Cameron Kaiser, Riverside County public health officer. "We're getting shots to people as fast as we can, but until then we still have to break the cycle of transmission. We can't do that without knowing if people are infected, and that means tests."

Riverside County's state-evaluated metrics include a 7.6 percent positivity rate and 16.6 adjusted new cases per day for every 100,000 county residents. The positivity rate meets the red tier range which is between 5 and 8 percent. The case rate needs to be between 4 and 7 per 100,000 residents to move to the red tier.

Riverside County's case rate is also worsened by the upwards adjustment for not reaching the statewide median of PCR swab tests, which is 386.4 per 100,000 population. Riverside County's test rate, which was well above 800 per 100,000 population late last year, is now at 361.4 per 100,000 residents.

Based on the state's criteria, if Riverside County tests at a higher rate than the statewide median, the adjusted case rate will be reduced instead of increased.

Testing is free at a county or state-run site and available for anyone. There are also mobile teams that support testing in specific communities, businesses or organizations by testing for one or two days. There are several testing sites spread throughout Riverside County.

To find county and state-run locations and make an appointment, go online to gettested.ruhealth.org. For a list of other COVID-19 test sites in your area, click https://covid19.ca.gov/get-tested/.

Follow official sources for information, including Riverside University Health System-Public Health on Facebook and @RivCoDoc on Twitter.

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