



County of Fresno

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

May 15, 2020

Dr. Sonia Y. Angell
State Public Health Officer and
Director California Department of Public Health
P.O. Box 997377, MS 0500
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

Dear Dr. Angell:

The County of Fresno Department of Public Health, sincerely appreciates your leadership and guidance navigating the State of California through the COVID-19 pandemic. We fully recognize the difficulties inherent in your positions during this time and value your concern for public health. The stay-at-home order implemented in March was essential in allowing us to better understand the communicability of this disease, allowed us to ramp up testing and case investigation, and to work with our hospitals and health care systems to address potential surge.

Fresno County has 15 incorporated cities and a population of 1,023,000 residents across some 6,000 square miles. Today, we do not meet the State established benchmark for epidemiologic stability. Based on what we know, the threshold of 100 cases over 14 days for a population of 1 million will not be achieved anytime soon. Additionally, the threshold of 1 death in the past 14 days seems disconnected from what is happening across a population of one-million people.

In Fresno County, throughout this pandemic, our retail food facilities have provided essential services to our community ensuring we have fresh fruits and vegetables, protein sources, milk and dairy products, and prepared meals available to our community. This has been accomplished by allowing our community markets, grocery stores, bakeries, and restaurants to continue to operate with strict health and safety protocols in place. It has also required that our Health Inspectors be available to provide inspection, consultation, and education to food facility operators as they train their workforce to remain safe and to provide safe food sources to our community. Consider the following:

- An estimated 1,047 permitted retail grocery stores and community markets have remained open.
- An additional 140 bakeries and 633 food trucks have been able to operate with pick-up and take-out orders.
- An estimated 2,200 restaurants of all shapes and sizes have been allowed to operate with strict sanitation practices and using best practices for employee safety, providing “take-out only”.
- The 340 bars and taverns throughout Fresno County have remained closed.

Promotion, preservation and protection of the community's health

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Since March of this year, our Communicable Disease team has been investigating and tracing COVID-19 cases. Some have intersected with ongoing retail food establishments. The response of the retail food establishments in addressing these concerns has been prompt and appropriate.

We are requesting to move further into Stage 2 by allowing “Dine-In” food service to begin with facility adherence to the protective measures defined in the May 12, 2020 Industry Guidance. As we make this move further into Stage 2, we will continue to increase our efforts to educate our community to ensure that we remain in a pandemic response, that social distancing protocols remain in place, and we expect our community and business leaders to continue to do everything possible to reduce COVID-19 disease transmission in our community. We plan and expect every sector of our diverse community to reopen cautiously and gracefully, with full attention to public health and safety, and in alignment with the state’s plans.

Attached is additionally information related to our capacity for moving more deeply into Phase 2 of the RoadMap to Recovery. We look forward to working collaboratively with the State in implementing this program in Fresno County. Please feel free to contact me with any questions at 559-600-6405.

Sincerely,



Rais Vohra, M.D., Interim Public Health Officer
Fresno County Department of Public Health



David Pomaville, Director
Fresno County Department of Public Health

Attachments

1. Response to Readiness Criteria
2. Health Officer Orders and Guidance
3. Health Alerts
4. EMS Protocols