

San Bernardino County coronavirus cases climb by 14 to 31

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PUBLISHED: March 24, 2020 at 12:09 p.m. | UPDATED: March 24, 2020 at 6:16 p.m.

The number of confirmed [novel coronavirus](#) cases in [San Bernardino County](#) grew by 14 over a 24-hour period, a health official said Tuesday, March 24.

The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 [jumped from 17 Sunday](#) to 31 as of 4:30 p.m. Monday, March 23, Trudy Raymundo, the county's public health director, told the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors. That number is expected to grow again later Tuesday, she said.

County officials did not provide an update on confirmed cases Monday, March 23.

"I'm a little hesitant to see what our daily case rate is going to be for today," Raymundo said.

Map: [Daily count of coronavirus cases in Southern California by county](#)

Also on Tuesday, county supervisors issued a moratorium through April 30 on utility shutoffs and the eviction of residential and commercial tenants in unincorporated areas affected by the pandemic.

The moratorium follows [an order from Gov. Gavin Newsom](#) that has been adopted by [cities in the county](#). Newsom's order, however, lasts until May 31.

Board Chairman Curt Hagman asked that the county remain flexible in case there are more changes at the state and federal level.

"There are a lot of moving parts to this," he said. "We want to try to keep our economy and our people as strong as they can on all levels. This gives us a month to look at things and then react before that time period's up if we need to change, modify or extend."

Supervisors were also updated on coronavirus testing in the county.

As of Monday, 408 tests for COVID-19 have been done countywide, which is extraordinarily low, Raymundo said.

"We are doing everything we can, understanding that we need to increase capacity for testing in the community if we are ever going to be able to understand the extent and the magnitude of this disease in our communities," she said.

The county, like many throughout the nation, is struggling to get tests. The county ordered 300 more tests. When officials tried to order more, the vendor had sold out, Raymundo said. They're looking at other possible vendors and monitoring the status of tests still under review by the Federal Drug Administration, she said.

It's not just a challenge getting tests, there's also a shortage of supplies that could impact the county's ability to offer [drive-thru testing](#).

There are plans to roll out a pilot test site later this week, but these sites need about 50 employees, all of whom need supplies and protective gear, she said.

Sites are planned for the High Desert, the county's west end, the mountains and the Morongo Basin, she added.

"Really now it's just a waiting game for supplies," she said. "We've got the plans and logistics already in mind."

Just because the county's testing lags behind neighboring counties, doesn't mean there are fewer cases here, Hagman said.

"We have a lot more people out there, we just haven't tested them yet," he said. "That's why it's important if you not feel well that you stay home and are not out there infecting other people and other residents. There's just a lack of supplies nationwide and worldwide at this point."

The county is no longer required to monitor travelers out of China, Iran and the rest of Europe, she said. Two county residents who were passengers on the Grand Princess cruise ship have returned home and are being monitored by communicable disease officials, she said.

The public health lab is continuing to focus on the most at risk and vulnerable populations, including healthcare workers, those over 65 years old and with underlying conditions, the homeless, uninsured and those living in congregate settings, such as correctional facilities.

Late Monday, March 23, the San Bernardino City Unified School District reported that an employee at Dominguez Elementary School in San Bernardino [has tested positive for the new coronavirus](#). A San Bernardino County [sheriff's deputy also tested positive](#).

County officials decided not to release the age, gender or residence of those who test positive for COVID-19, in part, to protect their identity. They also worry about stigmatizing certain communities or residents and offering residents false hope that they are safe if there are no confirmed cases in their city, Raymundo said.

Public health officials say residents need to assume the virus is already present in their cities because of community spread.

“That is why it is so critical that individuals, irrespective of whether or not I’m dividing up this disease by city, need to heed the governor’s orders,” Raymundo said. “Please, unless you need to leave, stay home. Practice social distancing, wash your hands, practice good hygiene, because we know it’s in the community.”

The county has received nearly 150 reports of county businesses violating [Newsom’s March 19 order](#) for non-essential businesses to close to the public, Raymundo said. For now, the plan is to reach out to those businesses to remind them of the order and the need to protect public health, she said.

The county is working to launch an online dashboard on its website where residents can find information on confirmed cases, test counts, links to other data in other counties and other information on the outbreak, Raymundo said.

“Hopefully that will be ready in the next 24 hours, but I’m excited to be able to roll that out because I think data has been a really big push at this point and it will also help to better inform our community,” she said.