

San Bernardino County to start reopening parks, golf courses this weekend



Prado Regional Park in Chino is seen Friday, Oct. 18, 2019. San Bernardino County is planning to begin reopening parks and golf courses this weekend. (File photo by Cindy Yamanaka, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)

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Parks, golf courses and other outdoor recreation areas in San Bernardino County will start reopening this weekend, county officials announced Wednesday, April 22.

Some of the facilities will be open at minimum levels, as it will take time to get staff back in place after closures due to [the coronavirus](#), Board of Supervisors Chairman Curt Hagman said during a morning news conference.

“We also want to make sure everyone is still practicing their physical distancing and we encourage them to check in with the place they’d like to go visit to make sure it’s open this weekend,” Hagman said.

Residents can again enjoy county parks, lakes, trails and golf courses.

Hiking, biking, boating and other non-contact outdoor activities, such as horseback riding, tennis and golf will be allowed. But camping, contact sports, parties and barbecues still aren’t allowed, the county says.

Activities should be limited to residents' immediate households. Social distancing and face coverings will still be required. Parking lots will be open.

Clubhouses and restaurants can still only offer drive-thru, curbside pickup or delivery. In many cases, restroom facilities are not yet open or available, a county news release states.

The county's recovery coalition is still working on a plan for businesses to reopen. More information on that will be shared in a video next week, Hagman said.

Meanwhile, the county has started sharing more information about residents who have tested positive for COVID-19, including more details on age and race. The statistics will be included in the county's online dashboard starting Wednesday, Public Health Director Trudy Raymundo said.

The dashboard also includes where testing is being done and the community in which the patients who died lived, their sex and ethnicity.

This data will help determine when and how to modify stay-at-home orders, as outlined by Gov. Gavin Newsom last week.

"We're really drilling down to see whether there's disparity among race and where there's disparity among age," Raymundo said. "That is so critical for all of our movements going forward. We need to understand where that disparity lies and whether or not we are inadvertently missing certain populations as we move and respond to this pandemic."

As for the county's skilled nursing facilities, the county's response team is ready to quickly head to facilities when there's a positive case or a suspected case, Raymundo said. The team will assess the situation and offer training and support, she said.

The response team is part of the county's task force of county, state and federal officials working to slow the spread of COVID-19 in nursing facilities.

Public health officials aim to expand testing at skilled nursing facilities, including residents and staff.

The task force is looking for facilities to serve as "COVID centers of excellence," which will be a model for others in the county, but also places that county officials believe can appropriately care for COVID-positive patients, Raymundo said.

"I think the reality is that we will probably discover a positive in almost every site that we do testing in," Raymundo said. "Ultimately for our long-range planning and long-term goal, we need to ensure that all sites can appropriately care for any COVID-positive or COVID-suspected patients."

Testing remains an important part of understanding the full extent of the disease in the county, Raymundo said.

Raymundo said she intends to make testing available to patients without symptoms, but that depends on having adequate supplies.

The number of hospitalizations has been lower than the county's projected, leaving beds and ventilators available for additional patients, officials said.

"Since the past seven or eight days we've been trending significantly below what our projections have been as far as the number of hospitalized patients," said Dr. Rodney Borger, an emergency medicine physician with Arrowhead Regional Medical Center. "We're nowhere near the surge capacity that we created in our hospital system."

Over the past 10 days, the number of patients being treated at hospitals and those in intensive care units have remained flat, Borger said. Of the 1,000 hospital beds available for treating COVID-19 patients, 307 were in use as of Monday night. Intensive care unit beds also remain available, according to the county's data.

Ventilators and beds are still available at county hospitals, he said. As of Monday, April 20, 307 ventilators were in use and 529 were available.

"We actually have the ability to take care of more patients should they become ill," Borger said.

County health officials will keep monitoring the numbers daily, projecting out about seven to 10 days, Borger said.

"We're going to need to watch and see as we start to open things up, is that going to cause an increase in hospitalizations?" he said. "We're watching this on a day-by-day basis, so we'll have an early warning as to if what we're doing is creating a problem and we'll be able to act."

The county will host a video briefing on its response to the novel coronavirus crisis every Friday, Hagman said.