

Del Norte County remains in red tier another week

April 29, 2021



Del Norte County will spend a twelfth week in the red tier of COVID-19 restrictions, according to state health officials.

The county's tier classification has remained unchanged in recent weeks as its COVID-19 cases have remained fairly consistent.

Still, the county continues to see new virus cases, with an average of 13.5 new cases a day per 100,000 in population.

That's the highest per-person rate in the state, and would have put the county in jeopardy of moving to more restrictions if not for the state's small-county exemption, which allows the county to stay in the red tier so long as it has fewer than 35 cases in a week.

For the week ending April 17, the week the state used to make its latest restriction level determinations, the county reported 26 cases of the virus, according to the California Department of Public Health.

Numbers have continued to drop in the past week, with just 14 active cases reported in the community as of Tuesday, according to the county public health department. That's the lowest since at least the beginning of the year.

Last week another tool in the fight against the pandemic was returned to the state's toolbox, with federal and state health officials completing their review of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and a western states panel giving the shots the greenlight to be administered.

"After additional review, analysis and scrutiny, experts have concluded the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is safe, effective and will protect you against the COVID-19 virus," said Governor Gavin Newsom in a statement after the approval, noting he himself had already received the shot. "I encourage all Californians to trust the science, getting vaccinated is the best way to protect ourselves and our loved ones and end the pandemic."

The use of the vaccine had been paused for several days after reports of blood clots occurring in a very small number of those who received the vaccine, mostly women between ages of 18 and 49. That pause ended April 24, after federal officials endorsed the use of the vaccine.

"More than half of Californians 16 and older have received one of the three vaccines available, and the one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine is also an important tool in our fight to stop the spread of COVID-19, especially as more aggressive variants of the virus spread throughout the country," said State Epidemiologist Dr. Erica Pan in a statement after the approval. "We hope we continue to make progress in getting more Californians vaccinated so we can move beyond this pandemic."

In all, over 13,700 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in Del Norte County. About 37% of the state's population is fully vaccinated.

County health officials are still holding weekly vaccination events on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at the Del Norte County Fairgrounds. Limited clinics are also available at Smith River Elementary School. Registration is available online at <https://myturn.as.me/schedule.php> or by calling 707-951-6679.

Sutter Health is also offering clinics on Thursdays and Fridays. More information is online at www.sutterhealth.org/coast/for-patients/health-alerts/covid-19-vaccine.

A handful of local pharmacies are also offering vaccines: RiteAid is making appointments online at www.riteaid.com/covid-19, Safeway is making appointments online at www.safeway.com/pharmacy/covid-19.html and Walgreens is making appointments online at www.walgreens.com/findcare/vaccination/covid-19 or by phone at 1-800-WALGREENS.

Walmart is also making vaccine appointments online at www.walmart.com/COVIDvaccine.

