



LASSEN COUNTY

Health and Social Services Department

- HSS Administration**
- Public Guardian**
336 Alexander Avenue
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8128
- Grant and Loans Division**
1400 Chestnut Street, Ste. C
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8309
- Behavioral Health**
555 Hospital Lane
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8108/8112
- Brashear Annex**
700 Brashear Street
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8112
- Patients' Rights Advocate**
336 Alexander Avenue
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8322
- Public Health**
1445 Paul Bunyan Road
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8183
- Environmental Health**
1445 Paul Bunyan Road
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8183
- Community Social Services**
1400 Chestnut Street, Ste A
Susanville, CA 96130
- LassenWORKS
Business & Career Network**
PO Box 1359
1616 Chestnut Street
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8152
- Child & Family Services**
1600 Chestnut Street
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8277
- Adult Services**
PO Box 429
1400 Chestnut Street, Ste B
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8158
- HSS Fiscal**
PO Box 1180
Susanville, CA 96130
(530)251-2614

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: SEPTEMBER 23, 2021

TIME: 1:30 PM

Lassen County Health and Social Services Issues Statement on Lassen County Vaccination Rate

The Lassen County Health and Social Services, Public Health Department (LCPH), has worked diligently on our local COVID-19 response since the pandemic emerged in early 2020. LCPH staff continues to work closely with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), regional colleagues, and our county partners to implement mitigation strategies in a timely, thoughtful manner. We take our role to inform and protect the public seriously. Along with that comes transparency.

One of the longstanding issues we in Lassen County face is the ongoing discrepancies between our COVID-19 mitigation efforts that is being reported by the state. Numerous times the Governor has reported that Lassen County has the lowest vaccination rates in the state. In a ranking system, one of the 58 counties must be last but in this case it is not Lassen County.

The data discrepancy issue is not surprising since Lassen County is an anomaly within this state in that we are not only a geographically large rural county, but we are home to a federal army base, a federal correctional institution, and two state prisons. Our incarcerated population accounts for 25% of our population. Additionally, while LCPH has a strong working relationship with our state and federal partners, we have no jurisdiction over their COVID-19 mitigation decisions, actions, and record keeping.

We continue to receive inquiries from media outlets regarding the Governor's erroneous information about our vaccination rate yet their reporting efforts have not led to any changes or attempts by the state to reconcile these discrepancies. We also hear from concerned citizens about the fear of COVID transmission because our "people" do not want to get vaccinated. While we encourage everyone who is eligible to receive a vaccination do so, vaccination hesitancy is not limited to Lassen County.

There are two critical data elements needed to calculate our vaccination rate, 1) our county population, and 2) the number of vaccines given to county residents to reach a fully vaccinated status (one dose of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, or two doses of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine).

To estimate our county population, the state uses the figures released by the Department of Finance. For Lassen County, this number is 27,572 (<https://dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/Estimates/e-1/>)

This number is then adjusted to the number of vaccine eligible individuals or those 12 years and older (<https://www.kidsdata.org/region/327/lassen-county/summary#6/demographics>). The adjusted number for Lassen County is 24,017.

The second data element needed to complete the vaccination rate is the number of fully vaccinated individuals. This information is not as easy to ascertain since people may receive their vaccinations from a variety of places, including out of county or state. Based on the actual numbers reported to and by LCPH and the underestimated counts based on the number of vaccines administered by our local pharmacies, this number is 12,072.

Dividing the number of fully vaccinated individuals with our county population equals .5027 or 50.3% of Lassen County residents who are fully vaccinated.

This rate is underestimated. The rate does not include out of state vaccinations or accurately reflect pharmacy vaccination figures. We are working on strategies to shore up these numbers and will adjust the results as needed.

Our numbers differ from the state for two reasons, first, the state is using a different population estimate which we believe is overstated. We simply are unable to vaccinate people that do not exist.

Second, we made every attempt to include all the vaccination data available to account for all Lassen County residents. The state uses a zip code system which attributes some of our vaccinated residents to be included in another county's data set. For example, our Westwood and Clear Creek community residents' data is assigned to Plumas County rather than Lassen County, thus overstating Plumas rates and underestimating Lassen. This is also the case for some of our smaller communities in the northern part of our county. We added back those fully vaccinated individuals into our county count.

Our numbers remain underestimated since we do not include staff who have been vaccinated through their federal employers or those individuals who may have received a vaccination from their provider. While we have estimates of what this number may be, we are unable to verify and as such, we decided to not include these estimates in our total fully vaccinated count to ensure that we do not unintentionally double count individuals.

On September 23, 2021, California reports that 69.6% of the population statewide has been vaccinated. Lassen County reports that 50.3% of our population is fully vaccinated. This ranks us closer to 45 out of the 58 California counties, not 58th.

It is important to note that regardless of our county ranking, we have always made vaccinations available to anyone who wants to be vaccinated and we will continue to provide outreach and venue options needed to enhance vaccine availability and accessibility to all.

For more information contact Barbara Longo, Lassen County Health and Social Services Director, at Blongo@co.lassen.ca.us.