

Governor Newsom to End the COVID-19 State of Emergency

Published: Oct 17, 2022

California's pandemic response saved tens of thousands of lives, protected the economy, distributed nation-leading financial assistance and built up an unprecedented public health infrastructure

The SMARTER Plan will maintain California's operational preparedness to support communities and quickly respond to outbreaks

SACRAMENTO – Today, Governor Gavin Newsom announced that the COVID-19 State of Emergency will end on February 28, 2023, charting the path to phasing out one of the most effective and necessary tools that California has used to combat COVID-19. This timeline gives the health care system needed flexibility to handle any potential surge that may occur after the holidays in January and February, in addition to providing state and local partners the time needed to prepare for this phaseout and set themselves up for success afterwards.

With hospitalizations and deaths dramatically reduced due to the state's vaccination and public health efforts, California has the tools needed to continue fighting COVID-19 when the State of Emergency terminates at the end of February, including vaccines and boosters, testing, treatments and other mitigation measures like masking and indoor ventilation. As the State of Emergency is phased out, the SMARTER Plan continues to guide California's strategy to best protect people from COVID-19.

[SMARTER Plan progress update](#)

"Throughout the pandemic, we've been guided by the science and data – moving quickly and strategically to save lives. The State of Emergency was an effective and necessary tool that we utilized to protect our state, and we wouldn't have gotten to this point without it," said Governor Newsom. "With the operational preparedness that we've built up and the measures that we'll continue to employ moving forward, California is ready to phase out this tool."

To maintain California's COVID-19 laboratory testing and therapeutics treatment capacity, the Newsom Administration will be seeking two statutory changes immediately upon the Legislature's return: 1) The continued ability of nurses to dispense COVID-19 therapeutics; and 2) The continued ability of laboratory workers to solely process COVID-19 tests.

"California's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has prepared us for whatever comes next. As we move into this next phase, the infrastructure and processes we've invested in and built up will provide us the tools to manage any ups and downs in the future," said Secretary of the California Health & Human Services Agency, Dr. Mark Ghaly. "While the threat of this virus is still real, our preparedness and collective work have helped turn this once crisis emergency into a manageable situation."

Throughout the pandemic, Governor Newsom, the Legislature and state agencies have been guided by the science and data to best protect Californians and save lives – with a focus on those facing the greatest social and health inequities – remaining nimble to adapt mitigation efforts along the way as we learned more about COVID-19. The state's efforts to support Californians resulted in:

- Administration of 81 million vaccinations, distribution of a billion units of PPE throughout the state and processing of 186 million tests.
- Allocation of billions of dollars to support hospitals, community organizations, frontline workers, schools and more throughout the pandemic.
- The nation's largest stimulus programs to support people hardest hit by the pandemic – \$18.5 billion for direct payments to Californians, \$8 billion for rent relief, \$10 billion for small business grants and tax relief, \$2.8 billion to help with overdue utility bills, and more.

California's pandemic response efforts have saved tens of thousands of lives, kept people out of the hospital and protected the economy:

- California's [death rate](#) is the lowest amongst large states. If California had Texas' death rate, 27,000 more people would have died here. If California had Florida's rate, that figure jumps to approximately 56,000 more deaths.
- In only the first ten months of vaccines being available, a study showed that California's efforts [saved 20,000 lives](#), kept 73,000 people out of the hospital and prevented 1.5 million infections.
- California's actions during the pandemic protected the economy and the state continues to lead the nation in creating jobs and new business starts:
 - "[‘Lockdown’ states like California did better economically than ‘looser’ states like Florida, new COVID data shows](#),” with **California's economy having contracted less** than such states – economic output shrank 3.5% on average for the U.S., compared with 2.8% for California.
 - Since February 2021, **California has created 1,628,300 new jobs** – over 16% of the nation's jobs, by far more than any other state. By comparison, Texas created 1,133,200 jobs (11.3% of the nation's) and Florida created 787,600 jobs (7.9% of the nation's) in that same timeframe.
 - Since the beginning of 2019, data from the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) shows that **over 569,000 businesses started in California**, by far more than any other state.

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