

TO: Chairman Doug Chaffee, Supervisor, Fourth District and Honorable Members Board of Supervisors

FROM: Clayton Chau, MD, PhD, MASL, Agency Director  
Regina Chinsio-Kwong, DO, Chief Medical Officer/County Health Officer

DATE: 11/22/22

RE: Pediatric Respiratory Surge Update

---

The following is a status report on the Declaration of Health Emergency and Proclamation of Local Emergency for Pediatric Respiratory Surge that was declared on 10/31/2022 and was unanimously ratified by the Board of Supervisors on November 2nd, 2022.

Pursuant of California Health and Safety Code Section 101080 and Government Code Section 8630, the Board of Supervisors must review, the emergency declarations at least every 30 and 60 days, respectively and terminate them when emergency conditions no longer persist.

The health emergency was declared as Orange County's main licensed pediatric hospitals were strained to a point of nearing capacity or extending beyond surge capacity, requiring county-wide coordinated efforts to accommodate ongoing pediatric care needs throughout the community as the rising cases of several viral illnesses further threatened availability of hospital resources for residents. This situation continues to be the case as of November 22, 2022.

The conditions that would warrant termination of the Local Health Emergency and Local Emergency would be as follows:

1. Orange County's primary pediatric hospitals returning to an acceptable level of PICU and pediatric hospitalization according to original licensed capacity without need for space waivers or temporary program flexibilities
2. Percent occupancy of staffed pediatric beds and PICU beds both remain below 80% for at least one week
3. Discontinuance of load level balancing of inpatient census (Inter-Facility Transport- IFL) as well as Emergency Department (ED) transports to protect the hospital capacity of Orange County's primary pediatric hospitals
4. Total hospitalization rates due to respiratory viruses (RSV, influenza, and COVID-19) plateauing or on downward trend locally and regionally

The Health Care Agency's Operations Center remains activated to:

- Coordinate information and activities between local hospitals, Emergency Management System (EMS) transports locally and regionally

**Pediatric Respiratory Surge Update**

November 22, 2022

Page 2 of 2

- Communicate with Region and State for situational awareness
- Prepare to support non-pediatric hospitals that are planning to add in-patient care for pediatric patients by coordinating staffing requests, distributing equipment and other resources should a State of Emergency be declared by the Governor

**Current Pediatric Hospital Status**

- Local licensed pediatric hospitals are operating near/at or beyond capacity, with pediatric staffed bed occupancy at 75% and staffed PICU bed occupancy at 92% reported in am. By mid-day, 100% occupancy with multiple inpatients boarding in Emergency Departments.

**Current Respiratory Illness Trends**

- Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) levels remain high locally and regionally
- Influenza rates continue to rise earlier than previous influenza seasons from the last decade, and increasing beyond previous 2017-2018 influenza peak
- COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations have been increasing
- Current respiratory virus rates of RSV, influenza, and COVID-19 are resulting in higher ED visits (CHOC ED now consistently reporting more than 400 visits daily over the last 1.5 weeks- CHOC ED at Orange seeing 452 visits in last 24 hours, highest visit for a 24-hour period was November 14<sup>th</sup>- 489 visits), and pediatric bed and PICU bed occupancy of > 85%

**Recommended Action:**

It is recommended that the Local Health Emergency Declaration and Local Emergency Proclamation for Pediatric Surge 2022 continue as staffed pediatric bed and PICU bed occupancy remain > 80% and given the activation of the local medical surge plan and Agency Operation Center (AOC) to support coordinated response to meet increased pediatric hospitalization needs.

cc: Frank Kim, County Executive Officer