Asian Health Services

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Asian Health Services

ASIAN HEALTH SERVICES AND ALAMEDA COUNTY LAUNCH
FREE, ASIAN MULTILINGUAL, MULTICULTURAL COVID-19 TEST SITE IN OAKLAND CHINATOWN
Community leaders join forces to encourage testing, offer wraparound support to the Asian American and Pacific Islander Community

OAKLAND, CA -- Tuesday, August 18, 2020 -- Sherry Hirota, CEO of Asian Health Services in Oakland, Colleen Chawla, Director of Alameda County Health Care Services Agency and Dr. Jocelyn Freeman Garrick, Deputy Medical Director for Emergency Medical Services and Lead for Alameda County’s Testing Taskforce will announce the launch of the Asian Health Services and Alameda County COVID-19 Test Site.

Located at Madison Park in Oakland’s Chinatown, the site features testing, information, guidance, and support services in 12 Asian languages, including Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Tagalog, and Mongolian. Tests are available to everyone. Payment or insurance are not required, immigration status will not be asked, and it is not necessary to be a patient at Asian Health Services to receive a test and follow up support.

It is possible to have COVID-19 and spread it without experiencing symptoms. COVID-19 symptoms include cough, fever or chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, body aches or muscle pain, headache, sore throat, runny nose or congestion, nausea, diarrhea, or a new loss of smell or taste.

“Placing a testing site in Oakland’s Chinatown centralizes a critical resource within a community that carried the burden of stigma since the early days of this pandemic,” said Alameda County District 3 Supervisor Wilma Chan. “But this virus has no boundaries and it’s essential for anyone who is sick, has come into close contact with someone with COVID-19, or is working on the frontlines to come get tested and receive care and support.”
Asian Health Services recently completed a survey of 1300 Asian American in Alameda County. Key findings revealed a 3% rate of COVID-19 testing among Asian American, compared to an approximate 10% rate of testing of all ethnicities in California. The study cites high rates of fear and anxiety, loss of jobs, and severe lack of income and food.

“We are fighting back against being both blamed and ignored in this pandemic,” said Ms. Hirota. “Our community masked early, felt the rise in anti-Asian hate, and went underground. Now we must ensure that each of us is safe and supported. Our goal is to make sure our community has access to in language and in culture education, testing, counseling, case management, referrals, and compassion. We hope to see our community out in force to test and receive care, in language, and in culture.”

**Asian Health Services and Alameda County Community Test Site**

*Where:* Madison Park, 810 Jackson Street, Oakland, 94607  
*When:* Tuesdays: 12:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.; Thursdays and Fridays: 8:00 am to 4:00 p.m.  
*To make an appointment:* Please visit color.com/AHS. For assistance, please call the Asian Health Services Multilingual Helpline at 510/735-3222

“A testing site that serves the multicultural population of Oakland’s Chinatown is a necessary piece of Alameda County’s testing infrastructure,” said Alameda County District 5 Supervisor Keith Carson. “COVID-19 spreads easily in close communities and ensuring our residents and workers have the information they need in their language is vital to keep our friends, families and neighbors safe.”

Testing plays a vital role in stopping the spread of COVID-19. Alameda County has a coordinated strategy to place testing sites in areas to best reach disproportionately impacted communities of color, including the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. Alameda County is well passed its testing capacity goal of 3,100 tests per day. Additional free community testing sites are available in West Oakland, Fruitvale, East Oakland, San Leandro, Hayward and Pleasanton.

“Alameda County’s partnerships with community clinics like Asian Health Services has been invaluable.” said Dr. Jocelyn Freeman Garrick, Deputy Medical Director of Alameda County Emergency Medical Services and Lead for Alameda County’s Testing Taskforce. “Members of hard to reach populations are able to access testing from trusted providers in their communities.”

“Our mission is to end the injustice of health disparities,” Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf said. “Every Oaklander should have access to a free COVID-19 test today, and we will continue to work intentionally to reach our most underserved communities. I want to thank Alameda County Health Care Services Agency and all of our fiercely devoted community health center partners who will bring this care to our most vulnerable neighborhoods and residents.”

**Asian Health Services**

*Founded in 1974, Asian Health Services (AHS) is a community health center that provides primary, dental, and behavioral health services to underserved 50,000 patients of Oakland and surrounding communities in English and 14 different Asian languages, including Cantonese, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Khmer, Korean, Tagalog, Mien, Lao, Mongolian, Karen, Karenni, and Burmese. A community hub, AHS strengthens and empowers its patients and community through advocacy, and community programs. A nationally recognized community health center model, AHS stands at the forefront of quality and innovation.*

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