



# Supervisors discuss early COVID vaccine disparities in Contra Costa County

By [Cristina Rendon](#) Published January 26 [Coronavirus in the Bay Area](#) [KTVU FOX 2](#)

**CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, Calif.** - Data from Contra Costa Health Services shows more white people living in affluent communities have been vaccinated in the county compared to people in communities of color at the start of the vaccine rollout.

Vaccine equity was among the topics at Contra Costa County's Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday. Health Services Director Anna M. Roth updated supervisors on the department's response to COVID-19 where she and other officials detailed a plan aimed at ensuring the vaccine is distributed fairly once it is available to more age groups and the general public.

[Early data on vaccine distribution](#) currently shows roughly 33,500 white people in Contra Costa have received vaccines, which accounts for more than half of any

other race in the county. Data is also broken down by city of residence for people who have received the vaccine.

It shows people living in cities like Alamo, Danville, Diablo, Lafayette, Orinda, and Walnut Creek have the highest percentages of first doses at around 11% or higher compared to cities like Richmond, Bay Point, and Antioch that sit at roughly 5%, and have been hit hardest by COVID-19.

Deputy Health Officer Dr. Ori Tzvieli said doses are given to health centers, not cities. He admits the data is striking, but said it reflects who has been eligible to get the vaccine first as determined by the state.

"Health care workers and elders are disproportionately white, disproportionately wealthy," Tzvieli said. "We expect that to change over time as we go down through the age tiers and essential sectors."

District 1 Supervisor John Gioia who represents Richmond and San Pablo said he is always concerned when he sees communities like the one he represents having vaccination rates at a lower level, but is optimistic that the numbers will change in time once the vaccination is available to more people. If the numbers don't change, he said there would be cause for concern.

"This vaccine rollout must be done in a way that is equitable across our county especially to our harder hit communities," Gioia said.

Contra Costa Health Services said its Health Equity Officer and "Ethical and Equitable Vaccine Allocations Committee" have already been working to ensure the vaccine is given out fairly.

Right now, the majority of high volume vaccination sites are in communities of color in West and East county, including three in the Richmond-San Pablo area.

The health department is making calls and sending mobile teams to low income senior housing to help register and vaccinate people age 75 and older who don't have transportation or internet access, while also working to overcoming vaccine hesitancy.

Despite the disparities reiterated that they do anticipate the data will change once more people are eligible to get the shot.

"We are concerned by the disparities," Tzvieli said. "We are working hard to place vaccine sites in communities of color. It is our goal to get the vaccine out there to communities who are most affected."

Contra Costa Health Services is one of the few Bay Area health departments that is transparent with vaccine demographics on its website.

[A recent study](#) by the Kaiser Family Foundation looked at vaccine distribution in 16 states, not including California. It found similar results showing vaccine patterns by race and ethnicity appear to be at odds with who the virus has affected the most.

*Cristina Rendon is an Anchor & Reporter at KTVU Fox 2 News. You can email her at [cristina.rendon@foxtv.com](mailto:cristina.rendon@foxtv.com) or follow her on Twitter: @Cristinaktvu*

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