

Contra Costa County's Fire Department Opens Mass Vaccination Site

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The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District on Monday set up its first mass coronavirus vaccination site.

After Gov. Gavin Newsom's call for fire departments across the state to help get more people vaccinated, the East Bay fire department answered the call, setting up the vaccination clinic at a church parking lot in Hercules. Five hundred people were vaccinated Monday and 500 more are expected to get the shot Tuesday.

"We are all as a fire service using our EMTs and our paramedics and support personnel to operate what will be a growing number of public vaccination clinics," Steve Hill with the fire district said.

All of the people vaccinated at the drive-thru clinic had to be vetted and make an appointment with Contra Costa Health Services.

Lynn Gogna said she was relieved to finally get her shot.

"I have a 103-year-old mother-in-law," she said. "My husband and I wanted to make sure we were all protected."

New numbers show evidence of racial disparities when it comes to who is getting access to a vaccine in Contra Costa County and across the state.

County supervisor John Gioia said he's concerned.

"The vaccination rates are about three times higher in some of those wealthier, more white communities than in communities like Bay Point or Richmond, which have a much higher percent of African American and Latinx residents," he said.

Gioia said health leaders told him one possible reason for the disparity is that during the initial vaccine rollout many doses went to people in skilled nursing facilities, many of which are in the more affluent communities of Walnut Creek and Danville.

Gioia said to make sure there is equity, the county is planning to offer more clinics and do more outreach in communities with lower vaccine rates.

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