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Crunching Lamorinda's COVID-19 numbers

By Sora O'Doherty

As levels of Covid-19 infections are again rising, residents of Lamorinda are trying to assess their risk of contracting the potentially deadly disease, but obtaining clear numbers limited to Lamorinda is difficult if not impossible. COVID-19 data is collected at the county, state and federal levels, and is published on the internet. However, there is little local breakdown of the numbers and there is little conformity in how the numbers are reported by different agencies.

As of July 20, local numbers stood as follows, for Orinda, 72 cases in a population of 19,009, Lafayette had 58 cases in a population of 25,604, and Moraga had just 27 cases in a population of 16,946. For ease of comparison, the county ranks the number according to a projection of how many cases that would represent out of a population of 100,000. Orinda is at 379 by that measure, Lafayette would be at 227, and Moraga would be at 159. Of course, local population is nowhere near that number. Lamorinda's numbers compare to the worst location in Contra Costa County, San Pablo, which had 515 cases in a population of 31,413, or 1,639 cases out of 100,000. The best numbers in the county have been recorded at Bethel Island, which had just 2 cases out of a population of 2,137, which would be just 94 cases out of a population of 100,000.

Despite attempts to get a more detailed breakdown for Lamorinda, city, county and state officials believe that they are limited in what details they can release, citing

privacy concerns outlined in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). However, some aggregate numbers are available at the county or state level.

As of July 15, the state of California had over 356,000 reported cases of COVID-19 and more than 7,000 fatalities. Fatalities were highest among the Latino population at 44%, with whites at just over 31% and Blacks at nearly 9%. Latinos represent almost 39% of California's population, whites over 36% and Blacks only 6%, according to the state database. Latinos also represented nearly 67% of COVID deaths in children up to the age of 17 statewide.

County cases are also broken down by age group, with the highest number being in the 10-30 age group, followed by the age groups by decade. Children 13 to 18 have a slightly higher rate of infection to individuals in the 71 to 80 age group, but the numbers look very different when you look at death rates, as opposed to infection rates. There are very few deaths reported in the county for individuals under the age of 51. The highest death rate is in individuals from 81 to 90, followed by those over the age of 90.

There have been only 98 deaths in the county, and of those, over 60 have been residents and staff in long-term care facilities. Orinda experienced an early cluster of infections at the Orinda Acute Care facility, but numbers are low for long-term care facilities in Lafayette and Moraga. Cases in long-term care facilities have been tracked by the state. Only two facilities appear on the state list, how-

ever. Orinda Care Center LLC had 40 reported cases, but under 11 reported deaths and no active cases. Moraga Post Acute had less than 11 cases, with no active cases and no reported deaths. It appears that facilities with no reported cases are not included in the list at all. Lamorinda has 11 long-term care facilities, according to Orinda Vice Mayor Amy Worth.

Worth was involved in an early effort to conduct a baseline survey of long-term care facility residents. The community foundations of Orinda, Moraga and Lafayette raised funds for a local medical group to conduct testing in local long-term care facilities. The doctors of the Orinda Medical Group, Brian Candell, Yenjean Hwang, and Shawn D. Rosen, plus their staff volunteered their time to conduct the testing.

Recently, owing to a sharp rise in the percentage of positive COVID-19 tests in the county to over 8%, the county amended its social distancing health order to tighten face-covering requirements and to prohibit indoor gatherings where there is an elevated risk of infection. The over 8% testing positivity result was sufficient to trigger a review of the reopening activities in the county that had been allowed under a variance received from the state in June.

The county temporarily suspended indoor worship services and required that face coverings be required in outdoor dining settings at all time except when putting food or drink in the mouth, and similar requirements were expanded to members of extended family 'social bubbles.'

PUBLIC NOTICE

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that at its meeting held on July 15, 2020, the Board of Directors of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District adopted Ordinance No. 20-03 by the following vote:

AYES: DIRECTORS DONNER, JEX, JORGENS, AND DANZIGER
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: DIRECTOR BAITX
ABSTAIN: NONE

ORDINANCE NO. 20-03

ORDINANCE OF THE MORAGA-ORINDA FIRE DISTRICT OF CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, SETTING FORTH THE REQUIREMENTS AND/OR RESTRICTIONS PERTAINING TO BANNING OPEN BURNING AND RECREATIONAL FIRES DURING HIGH FIRE SEASON AND PROVIDING FOR ENFORCEMENT OPTIONS AND PENALTIES.

Restriction on Fires During Hazardous Fire Conditions. Open Burning on all lands within the jurisdiction of the Moraga Orinda Fire District ("MOFD"), including the local response area (LRA), is prohibited when the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) issues a burn suspension in the state responsibility area (SRA). Open Burning is also prohibited on all lands within the jurisdiction of the MOFD at any time the Fire Chief or his or her designee finds that atmospheric conditions or other local circumstances make such fires hazardous, including when factors, such as high winds, low fuel moistures, fire weather, the issuance of red flag warnings, or severe threat of wildland fire, present the risk of destruction by wildfire to life, wildlife, property or natural resources. The Fire Chief shall provide notice of the suspension on Open Burning by posting the suspension on the District's website and mailing notice to those residents on its mailing list. This prohibition shall be made effective 24 hours following its declaration. Any person who fails to comply with this section may be subject to a fine of \$500.00 per each day of violation. The prohibition on Open Burning applies to Open Burning, Campfires, Bonfires, Portable Outdoor Fireplaces, Ceremonial Fires and Recreational Fires, as defined in the 2019 California Fire Code. Campfires on private lands, with a MOFD issued fire permit and any additional restrictions as determined by MOFD staff.

The Ordinance shall become effective on August 15, 2020. The full text of Ordinance No. 20-03 is available for review by contacting the District Clerk during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) or online in the Agenda Packet posted for the meeting of July 15, 2020 at www.mofd.org. Marcia Holbrook, District Secretary/District Clerk CCT #6440961