



March 2021 Pathfinder

The best way to develop leaders, in the end, is to help them lead. The best way to learn to lead is to accept that help in the here and now.
-Harvard Business Review

Teamwork Matters

A message from
the City Manager

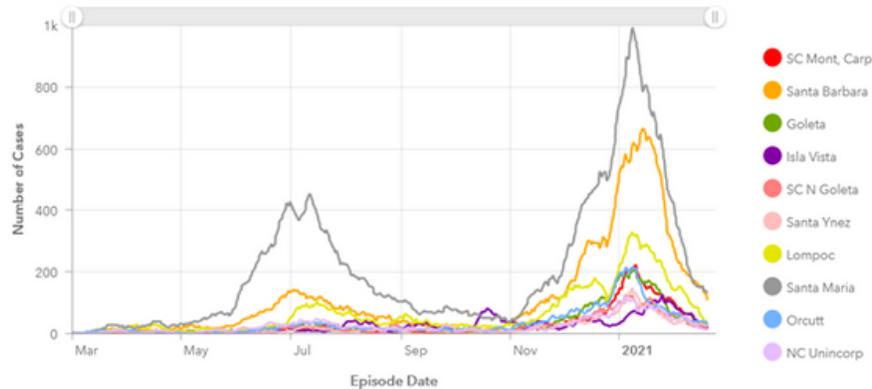
Jason Stilwell



Spring arrives this month and there is reason for optimism as coronavirus metrics remain on a downward trajectory. We look forward to more businesses and schools reopening, and more activities resuming, with modifications. Like you, I am eager for the day when the profound disruptions from this disease will no longer dominate everyday life.

Across Santa Barbara County and here in Santa Maria, we are seeing consistent declines in daily COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and patients in intensive-care units, and improvements in vaccination distributions. See the below chart from the [Public Health Department's dashboard](#). Further, more than 93,000 doses have already been allocated to County residents.

7-Day Rolling Sum of New Cases by Area
Not including Lompoc Federal Correctional Complex



The priorities are to widely distribute vaccines, and the Biden administration wants all Americans eligible by July. Health experts say if a high percentage of the most vulnerable populations are vaccinated, that will sharply reduce Covid risk. The benefits will be even greater if, as hoped, vaccines do not merely reduce the risk of severe symptoms but also reduce the chance of being infected and spreading it around. Researchers are closely studying the efficacy of vaccines on new variants as they are discovered.

The improving numbers in our County, region, and State offer encouragement that the worst of the year-old pandemic will be relegated to an epidemic, meaning it will continue to circulate but at a lower level. The virus may re-emerge in the fall, but it can be a manageable threat with the right precautions.

Thank you for being resilient, following guidelines to stop the spread, for patronizing local businesses that face intense headwinds, and for supporting your co-workers. Our actions will influence case rates and when we can safely return to normal life.

Jason