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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## County Officials Express Concern About COVID Tier Reassignment

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) today announced that local COVID-19 data places Humboldt County in the “Red” or Substantial tier under the state’s “Blueprint for a Safer Economy.”

The adjusted case rate of 12.1 and positivity rate of 4.0% do not meet the threshold for tier reassignment. However, the county met the state’s Health Equity Metric, which aims to reduce disparities by ensuring that no group within a county is disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

Under the Red tier, Humboldt will be the only county in the state allowed to have indoor gatherings, movie theaters, fitness centers, places of worship and dining. Local businesses, particularly restaurants and cafes, are urged to move forward cautiously. If virus data worsens or intensive care unit capacity for the Northern California Region dips below 15%, the state would require some sectors to move outdoors or cease operating altogether.

Humboldt County Health Officer Dr. Ian Hoffman registered strong disagreement with CDPH’s methodology and said he believes that Red tier status could be reversed in coming days. “In many ways, the data doesn’t support this decision,” he said. “Our case rates are the highest they’ve ever been, and our contact investigation teams are tracking more cases, not fewer. It’s unfortunate that we didn’t get to have a conversation with the state before this decision was handed down.”

Public Health Director Michele Stephens said that while some businesses will be able to reopen, this is not a victory as much as it is a cautionary tale. “This is not a time to let down your guard,” she said. “Our entire community, including our businesses, should continue to follow COVID prevention measures. Wear a mask. Maintain distance. Wash your hands. As more people are moving around our community, these measures become even more important.”

Some of the changes to sector operations under the Red tier include:

- **Bars, Breweries and Distilleries** – Closed.
- **Wineries** – Open outdoors only.
- **Family Entertainment Centers** – Open outdoors only.
- **Retail** – Open indoors at maximum 50% capacity.
- **Shopping Centers, Malls, Swap Meets** - Open indoors at maximum 50% capacity; Close common areas; Reduce food court capacity to 25% or 100 people, whichever is fewer.

- **Museums, Zoos and Aquariums** – Open indoors at maximum 25% capacity.
- **Places of Worship** – Open indoors at maximum 25% capacity or 100 people, whichever is fewer.
- **Movie Theaters** - Open indoors at maximum 25% capacity or 100 people, whichever is fewer.
- **Hotels and Lodging** – Close indoor pools, hot tubs and spa facilities; Fitness centers reduced to maximum 10% capacity.
- **Gyms and Fitness Centers** - Open indoors at maximum 10% capacity; Close indoor pools, saunas, steam rooms, hot tubs.
- **Restaurants** - Open indoors at maximum 25% capacity or 100 people, whichever is fewer.

The tier change will take effect one minute past midnight tonight.

For more information about the “Blueprint for a Safer Economy,” go to [covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/](https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/).

For the most recent COVID-19 information, visit [cdc.gov](https://cdc.gov) or [cdph.ca.gov](https://cdph.ca.gov). Local information is available at [humboldt.gov](https://humboldt.gov) or during business hours by contacting [covidinfo@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:covidinfo@co.humboldt.ca.us) or calling 707-441-5000.

Local COVID-19 vaccine information: [humboldt.gov/vaccineinfo](https://humboldt.gov/vaccineinfo),  
Humboldt County COVID-19 Data Dashboard: [humboldt.gov/dashboard](https://humboldt.gov/dashboard),  
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