

Coronavirus positivity rate hits record low

Newstex Blogs

CalMatters

September 16, 2020 Wednesday 1:40 PM EST

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Length: 2427 words

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Body

Sep 16, 2020(CalMatters: <https://calmatters.org> Delivered by Newstex) ;;; Good morning, California. It's Wednesday, September 16. Good news at last! Illustration via iStock Amid record-breaking fires[1], apocalyptic orange skies[2] and smoke-choked air[3], Californians finally have a bright spot of news: Coronavirus positivity rates statewide fell to an all-time low of 3.6%[4] over the past 14 days and 3.3% over the past week[5]. As a result, travelers from California no longer have to quarantine for two weeks upon arriving in New York, New Jersey or Connecticut, the three states announced Tuesday[6]. The welcoming news comes as hospitalizations and intensive-care admissions have fallen 61% and 56%, respectively, from their peak in mid-July, CalMatters' tracker shows[7]. It also comes as eight counties showed enough progress in containing the virus to move from the state's purple tier to the red tier[8] since the new system governing business and school reopenings was introduced three weeks ago[9], California Health and Human Services Secretary Mark Ghaly said Tuesday. Thirty counties are now in the most restrictive purple tier, 17 in the red tier, 9 in the orange tier and 2 in the least restrictive yellow tier. Next week, counties in the red and orange tiers will be eligible to move down a tier for the first time, allowing them to reopen more businesses, Ghaly said.

Ghaly: 'We want to be slow in the forward movement so we can make sure that any decision to move a county into a (different) tier is done thoughtfully to ensure that we don't cause businesses or communities to feel sort of stuck in the middle.' Meanwhile, the California Fitness Alliance, a group of nearly 300 businesses, sued Gov. Gavin Newsom and Los Angeles County[10] on Tuesday over the reopening guidelines, which they argue unfairly target gyms. More than 30 lawsuits[11] have been filed against Newsom's shelter-in-place order. _____ The coronavirus bottom line: As of 9 p.m. Tuesday night, California had 760,013 confirmed coronavirus cases and 14,451 deaths from the virus, according to a CalMatters tracker[12]. Also: CalMatters regularly updates this pandemic timeline tracking the state's daily actions[13]. And we're tracking the state's coronavirus hospitalizations by county[14]. Illustration by Rita Liu for CalMatters Every election season has its ups and downs — now this one has acrosses as well. Put your expertise to the test with this crossword puzzle[15] from CalMatters' Ben Christopher. And if the clues are giving you trouble, check out our voter guide[16] and Gimme Props game[17]. Advertisement <https://www.dairycare.com/climate-smart-dairy> Other stories you should know 1. California's adjusted poverty rate highest in nation A BART train rides above a homeless encampment in West Oakland. Photo by Anne Wernikoff for CalMatters California has the highest poverty rate in the United States when adjusted for cost of living, clocking in at 17.2%, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 Supplemental Poverty Measure report released Tuesday[18]. That translates to about 6.7 million Californians living in poverty, a slight improvement from 2018[19], when the Census Bureau found that 7.1 million Californians, or 18.1%, were living in poverty. Nevertheless, the Golden State has consistently led all other states in adjusted poverty rate since the Census Bureau began the data series in 2011, according to the California Business Roundtable. (Several times, the District of Columbia has topped

California.) California's 2019 unadjusted, or official, poverty rate was 11.4%, slightly lower than the national rate of 11.5%. California Business Roundtable President Rob Lapsley: 'Driven by our housing crisis, more and more Californians are finding it impossible to make ends meet.' For more on poverty and income inequality in California, check out CalMatters' California Divide series[20].

2. California wildfire update A small bear statue stands in front of a burned cabin by Huntington Lake on Sept. 13, 2020. Photo by Craig Kohlruss, The Fresno Bee Democratic vice-presidential candidate Kamala Harris joined Newsom in her home state Tuesday for a briefing on the wildfires that have charred more than 3.2 million acres[21], killed 25 and destroyed more than 4,200 structures. Harris emphasized the role of climate change in California's historic fire season, implicitly slamming Republican President Donald Trump for his Monday comments[22] during a visit to the Golden State. Harris[23]: 'It is incumbent on us, in terms of the leadership of our nation, to take seriously the extreme changes in our climate, and to do what we can to mitigate against the damage.' A new study found the record-breaking fire season is likely to deter Sierra Nevada tourists and outdoor enthusiasts, foreshadowing lasting economic consequences for California's mountain communities, CalMatters' Julie Cart reports.[24]

Ram Gurnari, who operates a tour company outside Yosemite National Park: 'There are many places in the world tourists can go. We are not the only one.'

3. Unemployment department audit to begin soon Image via iStock The California state auditor will begin an emergency audit of the beleaguered unemployment department[25] by the end of September, Assemblymember Rudy Salas, chair of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, announced Tuesday[26]. The audit will focus on the department's backlogged claims and workload, as well as its call center capacity and actions taken to improve response times. The audit will also assess the department's tech infrastructure — a key goal of the strike team Newsom formed July 29[27], which he said would 'deliver a roadmap' of solutions within 45 days. Though it's been more than 45 days, a roadmap has not yet been shared publicly. Salas, a Bakersfield Democrat[28]: 'We need to address why families are unable to talk to someone when they call (the department), the status of clearing the substantial case backlogs, and what is being done to protect Californians from the rising fraud and scam cases[29] that continue to target our most vulnerable communities.'

4. Making sense of affirmative action in UC admissions Illustration via iStock When it comes to Prop. 16[30], the November ballot measure that asks voters whether they want to lift California's ban on affirmative action, both the supporting and opposing campaigns are trying to make their case by throwing around a lot of different statistics — some of which seem contradictory, and many of which may confuse voters. CalMatters' Mikhail Zinshteyn breaks down where these numbers actually come from and puts them in context[31]. He also examines what affirmative action in California public universities and colleges might look like, noting that it wouldn't involve quotas, which are illegal, and would consider race and ethnicity 'in the most limited manner possible to achieve compelling goals,' like a diverse student body. Richard Thompson Ford, a Stanford Law School professor[32]: 'From the perspective of a university, considerations of things like legacy status and geography makes sense because universities are not looking for the 'best' individual applicants but for the best ensemble in the same way a theater company is not looking for the best actors as individuals but the best cast.'

Advertisements <https://www.socalgas.com/vision> CalMatters events September 18: Can California Create a Future-Ready Workforce? Register[33] Submit Your Questions[34] CalMatters commentary CalMatters columnist Dan Walters[35]: Newsom said he wants to step up California's game on fighting climate change, but he must contend with a stark reality. Five solutions to climate crisis: Newsom recognizes that our current climate targets are inadequate. We have the technology ready to go. Here's a checklist of what we should do, argues Dan Jacobson of Environment California[36]. No justice for high school ethnic studies bill: I urge the governor and the Legislature to properly fund this bill in next year's budget and restore its original implementation date so students don't have to wait a full decade to benefit from it, writes Luis Alejo, a former Assemblymember[37]. Don't fall prey to myths: Oil and gas companies are focused on a sustainable energy future that supports the health of our people, argues Cathy Reheis-Boyd, president of the Western States Petroleum Association[38]. Advertisement <https://byebyemattress.com/> Other things worth your time LAPD Chief says pandemic is driving increased gun violence, killings. // Los Angeles Times[39] California Highway Patrol launches investigation after officer drove patrol car through Trump crowd. // San Francisco Chronicle[40] Tiny apartments for Sacramento homeless will cost more to build than a luxury house. // Sacramento Bee[41] School campuses in affluent parts of California plan to open quicker than those in poor Latino ones. // Los Angeles Times[42] San Francisco to give \$1,000 a month to expectant Black, Pacific Islander mothers. Will it help bridge racial health gaps? // San Francisco Chronicle[43] A new political party that enlisted voters without their consent is now suing California to get on the ballot. // KPBS[44] Progressive California DAs form new alliance to combat 'tough on crime' organizations. // San Francisco Chronicle[45] See you tomorrow. Tips, insight or feedback? Email emily@calmatters.org [46]. Follow me on

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[1]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/09/fires-set-record-books-ablaze/> [2]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/09/california-orange-skies-evacuations-fires/> [3]: <https://calmatters.org/environment/2020/08/california-central-valley-heat-smoke-virus/> [4]: <https://update.covid19.ca.gov/> [5]: <http://www.oesnews.com/state-officials-announce-latest-covid-19-facts-156/> [6]: <https://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/politics/albany/2020/09/15/california-removed-new-york-new-jersey-quarantine-order/5801150002/> [7]: <https://calmatters.org/health/coronavirus/2020/04/california-coronavirus-covid-patient-hospitalization-data-icu/> [8]: <https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/> [9]: <https://calmatters.org/economy/2020/08/california-reopen-hair-salons-indoor-haircuts/> [10]: <https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2020/09/15/california-fitness-alliance-lawsuit-gov-gavin-newsom-coronavirus-covid-19-closures/> [11]: <https://calmatters.org/health/coronavirus/2020/05/california-shutdown-lawsuits-newsom-dhillon-coronavirus-shelter-in-place-executive-orders/#lawsuits> [12]: <https://calmatters.org/health/coronavirus/2020/03/california-coronavirus-by-the-numbers-cases-testing-masks-hospital-beds/> [13]: <https://calmatters.org/health/coronavirus/2020/04/gavin-newsom-coronavirus-updates-timeline/> [14]: <https://calmatters.org/health/coronavirus/2020/04/california-coronavirus-covid-patient-hospitalization-data-icu/> [15]: <https://calmatters.org/politics/post-it/2020/09/california-proposition-election-crossword-post-it/> [16]: <https://calmatters.org/election-2020-guide/> [17]: https://gimmemprops.calmatters.org/?_ga=2.72520532.631334870.1600121215-1298655619.1582910697 [18]: <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2020/demo/p60-272.pdf> [19]: <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2019/demo/p60-268.pdf> [20]: <https://calmatters.org/category/california-divide/> [21]: <https://fire.ca.gov/daily-wildfire-report/> [22]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/09/trump-biden-california-wildfires/> [23]: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/15/politics/kamala-harris-california-wildfires/index.html> [24]: <https://calmatters.org/?p=138156> [25]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/07/california-unemployment-agency-pandemic-pressure-benefits/> [26]: <https://a32.asmdc.org/press-releases/20200915-salas-emergency-audit-employment-development-department-moves-forward> [27]: <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/07/29/governor-newsom-takes-action-to-strengthen-state-unemployment-insurance-delivery-system/> [28]: <https://a32.asmdc.org/press-releases/20200915-salas-emergency-audit-employment-development-department-moves-forward> [29]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/09/labor-day-heat-wave-california-bay-area-2020/> [30]: <https://calmatters.org/election-2020-guide/proposition-16-affirmative-action/> [31]: <https://calmatters.org/education/2020/09/affirmative-action-uc-admissions/> [32]: <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2018/08/24/does-harvards-undergrad-admission-policy-discriminate/> [33]: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/future-of-work-can-california-create-a-future-ready-workforce-tickets-120258936717> [34]: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd5ZmxgTsn-Cx7q6FEhykGzL96KDT4Z0KA9EFMr3RGxMJM89Q/viewform> [35]: <https://calmatters.org/commentary/2020/09/california-gavin-newsom-climate-change-reality/> [36]: <https://calmatters.org/?p=138177> [37]: <https://calmatters.org/?p=138102> [38]: <https://calmatters.org/?p=137914> [39]: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-09-15/moore-says-covid-driving-factor-in-increased-la-gun-violence> [40]: <https://www.sfchronicle.com/crime/article/CHP-launches-investigation-after-officer-drove-15568989.php> [41]: <https://www.sacbee.com/news/local/homeless/article245547415.html> [42]: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-09-15/moore-says-covid-driving-factor-in-increased-la-gun-violence> [43]: <https://www.sfchronicle.com/health/article/New-SF-program-takes-aim-at-race-disparities-in-15566711.php> [44]: <https://www.kpbs.org/news/2020/sep/14/new-political-party-enlisted-voters-without-their/> [45]: <https://www.sfchronicle.com/crime/article/Progressive-DAs-form-new-alliance-to-combat-15569007.php> [46]: emily@calmatters.org [47]: <https://calmatters.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5f4af3af825368013c58e4547&id=fdbf3734c1&e=8df3ed9f4c> [48]: <https://calmatters.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5f4af3af825368013c58e4547&id=2a7ce24a72&e=8df3ed9f4c> [49]: <https://calmatters.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5f4af3af825368013c58e4547&id=9b9a39b357&e=8df3ed9f4c> [50]: <https://calmatters.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5f4af3af825368013c58e4547&id=ad27afd972&e=8df3ed9f4c> [51]:

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