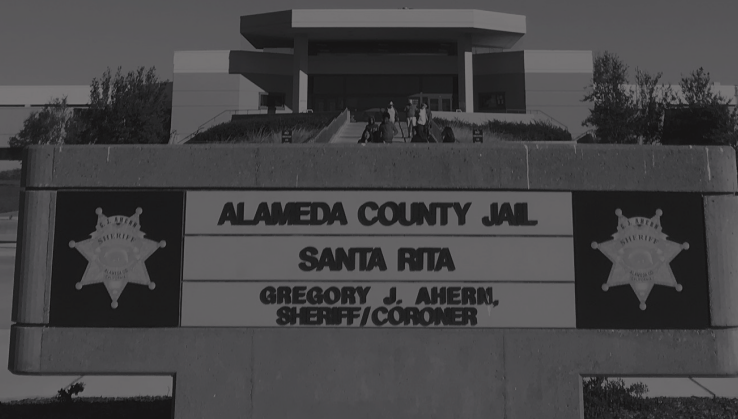


SANTA RITA JAIL WEEKLY UPDATE

DECEMBER 21–27, 2020



NOTE: GIVEN THE LOW TESTING RATE, ALL COVID-19 CASE NUMBERS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED UNDERESTIMATIONS

2140

JAIL POPULATION

339

**TOTAL NUMBER OF
POSITIVE COVID-19
TESTS SINCE APRIL**

55

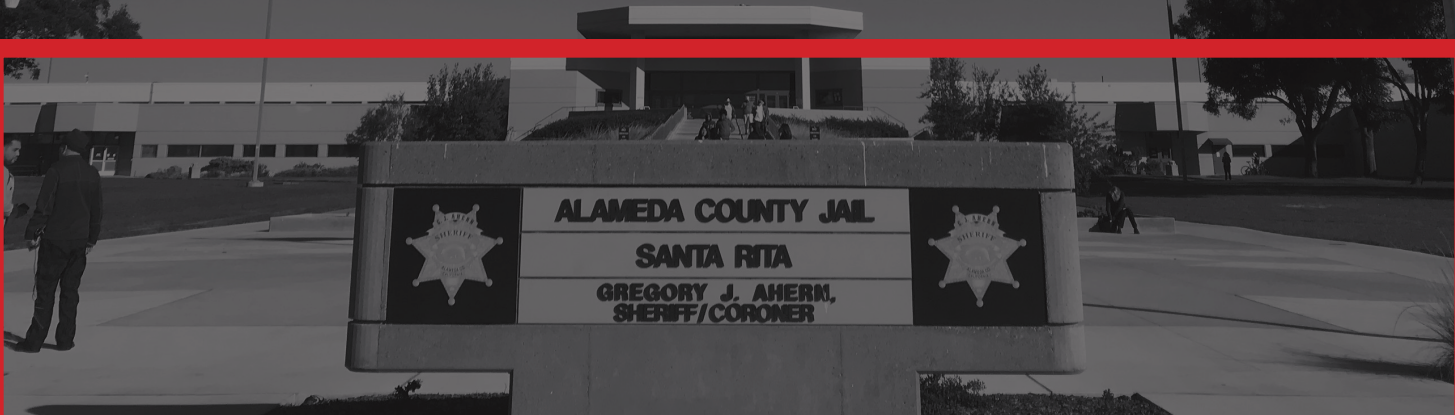
**TOTAL NUMBER OF NEW
POSITIVE COVID-19
TESTS IN PAST WEEK**

11%

**OF JAIL POPULATION
TESTED IN PAST WEEK**

** To view all historical population data and quarantines, visit bit.ly/SRJCOVID-19.*

THE JAIL'S SLOW RESPONSE TO THIS RAPIDLY-SPREADING OUTBREAK IS INEXCUSABLE GIVEN A NUMBER OF WARNING SIGNS THAT PREDICTED THIS OUTBREAK. ADVOCATES NOTICED AS EARLY AS THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17 THAT ALL OF HOUSING UNIT 34, A DORM-STYLE HOUSING UNIT, HAD BEEN PLACED UNDER QUARANTINE. THE PREVIOUS WEEK, ALL PODS IN ANOTHER DORM-STYLE UNIT, HOUSING UNIT 33, WERE QUARANTINED. HOUSING UNIT 34 IS A DORMITORY UNIT WITH CAPACITY FOR OVER 300 INDIVIDUALS. DORM-STYLE HOUSING PROVIDES LITTLE OPPORTUNITY FOR INFECTION CONTROL AND SOCIAL DISTANCING.



On Wednesday, December 23, 2020, active cases in Santa Rita Jail increased from 5 to 56 overnight, a 1020% increase. Over the course of the week, the jail also reported between 64 and 77 “Red” patients. Between December 21 and December 27, Santa Rita Jail administered only 225 COVID-19 tests total, which accounted for less than 11% of the jail.

The jail’s slow response to this rapidly-spreading outbreak is inexcusable given a number of warning signs that predicted this outbreak. Advocates noticed as early as Thursday, December 17 that all of Housing Unit 34, a dorm-style housing unit, had been placed under quarantine. The previous week, all pods in another dorm-style unit, Housing Unit 33, were quarantined. Housing Unit 34 is a dormitory unit with capacity for over 300 individuals. Dorm-style housing provides little opportunity for infection control and social distancing. HU34 was the epicenter of an outbreak in July which affected over 40 people, after an infected person was prematurely moved out of quarantine into the unit.

THE QUARANTINE OF INCARCERATED WORKERS IN HU33 AND 34 HAS HAD A RIPPLE EFFECT ON OTHER PARTS OF THE JAIL – IMPACTING THE LIVES OF INCARCERATED WORKERS THROUGHOUT THE FACILITY AND INCREASING THEIR OVERALL RISK OF INFECTION.

THEY WERE INSTRUCTED TO ONLY USE ONE TOWEL TO CLEAN MULTIPLE CELLS – BENCHES, TOILETS, AND SINKS WERE MOPPED WITH THE SAME TOWEL, WHICH ONE WOMAN REPORTED WAS “DRIPPING” WITH DIRTY LIQUID.

The quarantine of incarcerated workers in HU33 and 34 has had a ripple effect on other parts of the jail – impacting the lives of incarcerated workers throughout the facility and increasing their overall risk of infection. Because a large portion of low-security prisoners were unavailable to work, the jail sought out volunteers from the women’s dorm, Housing Unit 24.

A number of women from HU24 were called to work in Intake and Release (ITR) in mid-December. They were shocked and horrified by the experience. ITR cells are the first point of entry into the jail for people who may be COVID-19 positive. Yet the sole precaution taken by deputies with recently-vacated “Red” cells was to spray some sanitizer, wait two minutes, and then send in the women to clean wearing only paper masks and wrist-length gloves. Working a graveyard shift from 8pm well into the next morning, the women were forced to pull feces and foreign objects from the ITR toilets. They were instructed to only use one towel to clean multiple cells – benches, toilets, and sinks were mopped with the same towel, which one woman reported was “dripping” with dirty liquid.