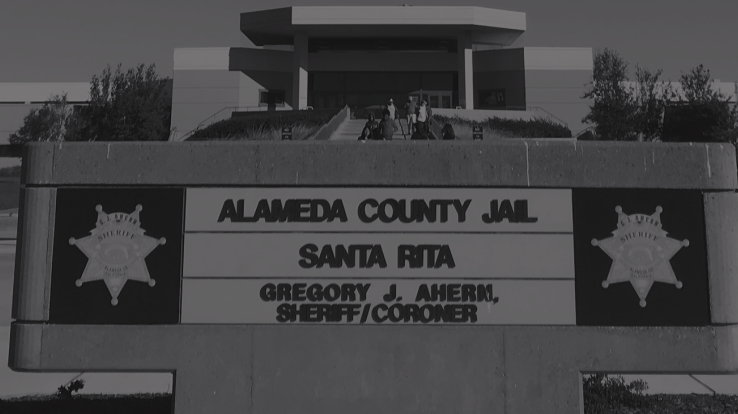


SANTA RITA JAIL WEEKLY UPDATE

FEBRUARY 22–MARCH 1, 2021



STATISTICS AS OF MARCH 1, 2021.

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

2252

JAIL POPULATION

549

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

5

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

10%

**OF JAIL POPULATION
TESTED IN PAST WEEK***

4

**PEOPLE WITH
COVID-19
("DARK RED")**

14

**PEOPLE WITH
COVID-19 SYMPTOMS
("RED")**

11

**NUMBER OF HOUSING
PODS QUARANTINED
THIS WEEK****

2

**NUMBER OF HOUSING
PODS UNDERGOING SERIAL
TESTING THIS WEEK***

NOTES ON STATISTICS

* Santa Rita Jail's testing rates are currently much higher than during previous outbreaks. During previous outbreaks, an average of 7-10% of the jail population was tested within any given week. The implementation of serial testing means that some individuals will be tested multiple times, so testing coverage is likely below this % of the entire jail population.

** Housing Units in Santa Rita Jail have been quarantined repeatedly, some numerous times just in one month. This causes stress and anxiety, results in canceled court dates, and reduces people's contact with their legal and emotional support systems.

For more complete statistics and COVID-19 quarantines, please visit bit.ly/SRJCOVID-19.

For information about the Santa Rita Jail Hotline, please contact srjhotline@nlgf.org.

For more information about the SRJ Solidarity Weekly Updates and testimony-gathering project, please contact info@srjsolidarity.org.



SANTA RITA JAIL POPULATION HIGHEST SINCE MARCH

On Monday, March 1, the population in Santa Rita Jail reached 2,252 individuals. This is the highest that the jail population has been since March 1, 2020, when the Alameda County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) began [publishing COVID-19 and population statistics](#) one year ago. The jail population first reached 2,000 individuals on October 7, and the population has steadily increased since then.

This increase in population, occurring against the backdrop of a global pandemic, has placed **enormous stress on incarcerated people, fully one-quarter of whom are awaiting transfer to a state or federal facility.** On February 18, ACSO reported the [first suicide in Santa Rita Jail in 13 months](#), marking the first in-custody death of the year. The suicide occurred in Intake and Release (ITR) only a few days after the individual's arrest. Prior to

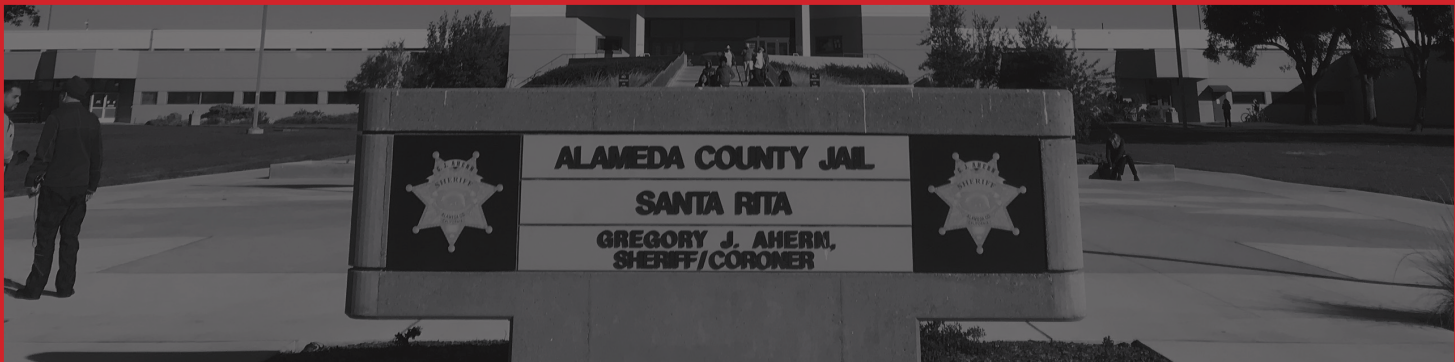
IT IS CLEAR THAT NO HALFHEARTED REFORM MEASURE PROVIDES MENTAL AND PHYSICAL RELIEF OF NEARLY THE SAME MAGNITUDE AS SIMPLY RELEASING PEOPLE FROM SANTA RITA JAIL. DESPITE ALL THIS, ACSO AND ALAMEDA COUNTY CONTINUE TO PUSH PEOPLE THROUGH THE CARCERAL SYSTEM BY SWEEPING HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS AND OVERCHARGING CRIMES OF SURVIVAL.

“AHERN NEEDS TO GO!”

– HOTLINE CALLER IN HOUSING UNIT 24, WEDNESDAY 2/24/21

the coronavirus pandemic, Santa Rita Jail was described as “the most dangerous place in Alameda County” due to the extraordinary amount of in-custody deaths in the facility. Incarcerated people have consistently reported that the [“crisis-level” conditions](#) in the jail remain unaltered during the pandemic; the only major change being a decrease in population due to mass releases and the adoption of an emergency bail schedule on April 6, 2020. **It is clear that no halfhearted reform measure provides mental and physical relief of nearly the same magnitude as simply releasing people from Santa Rita Jail. Despite all this, ACSO and Alameda County continue to push people through the carceral system by sweeping homeless encampments and overcharging crimes of survival. Ninety people were booked into Santa Rita Jail during the week of February 22 alone, while only 30 people were released.**

Stephanie Navarro (AVC655) is currently incarcerated in Housing Unit 24E, a high-risk pod. She reported that recently, four individuals were moved to her pod from elsewhere in Housing Unit 24. The four individuals have no preexisting medical conditions, but there is simply nowhere



else to place them. Stephanie requested that this information be shared so that the public can understand how the population increase runs in contradiction to both CDC recommendations and the jail's written protocols around isolating medically-vulnerable people.

INCARCERATED WORKERS KEEP THE JAIL RUNNING

An under-appreciated consequence of the increasing jail population is the additional pressure it places on “trustees”: incarcerated workers who volunteer to clean housing pods. It is incarcerated workers, not deputies, who are responsible for cleaning all areas occupied by prisoners – including high-risk areas such as ITR and cells recently vacated by prisoners who are quarantining or COVID-19 positive. Pod workers work multiple shifts from 5am-11pm, seven days per week, for no pay. “They’re calling my name all day...from lights on to lights off,” says one pod worker. Pod workers receive no benefits or incentives for their work, aside from relief from [enforced idleness that was the norm in Santa Rita Jail](#) since well before the coronavirus pandemic caused a reduction in recreation time.

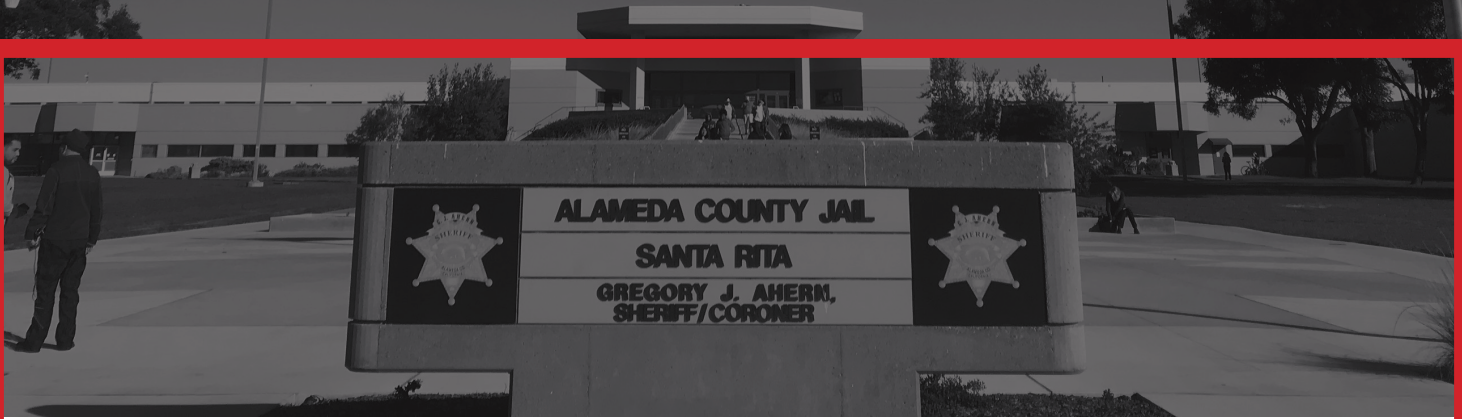
VACCINATION BEGINNING AT SANTA RITA JAIL

On Friday, February 26, representatives for the Alameda County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) and Wellpath announced in a conference call with

STAFF COMPLIANCE WITH TESTING AND VACCINATION CONTINUES TO BE SHOCKINGLY LOW.... WELLPATH REPRESENTATIVES SHARED THAT ONLY 62% OF MEDICAL STAFF HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY WILL GET THE VACCINE.

County Supervisor Richard Valle that the jail has begun vaccinations for high-risk patients, and that 79 individuals were vaccinated for the coronavirus during the week of February 22. Wellpath's new [“COVID-19 and Flu Outbreak Control Plan”](#) states that Wellpath will use a “prior consent process” to estimate how many doses to order from Alameda County Department of Public Health (ACDPH) each week. **The plan does not specify what questions are used to obtain consent, and advocates pointed out on February 26 that other counties are utilizing an opt-out rather than an opt-in system to ensure more thorough coverage.** Wellpath also plans to utilize a prioritization schedule:

- **First Tier:** Patients with an Orange medical alert and patients who have a CDC comorbidity that increases risk of complications such as hospitalization or mortality.
- **Second Tier:** Pod/Inmate Workers and patients living in Dormitory-style Housing Units
- **Third Tier:** All other incarcerated patients



Staff compliance with testing and vaccination continues to be shockingly low. During the week of February 22, only 18 tests were performed on an estimated 500 staff that

circulate through the jail each week. On Friday, February 19, Wellpath representatives shared that only 62% of medical staff have indicated that they will get the vaccine.

FEATURED TESTIMONY

Anonymous

“Slavery and human trafficking of Black humans continues to take place in jails and counties – such as Alameda County. If Black lives really matter, why can’t I go home? The Alameda County District Attorney’s Office and Alameda County Superior Court judge just allowed the Ghost Ship fire man to plead guilty to 36 counts of involuntary manslaughter charges in exchange for one-and-a-half years on an ankle monitor and three years felony probation. Remember, he’s white. I’m Black. That’s a slap in the face to all Black human lives. They created this deal for him. I’m accused for a robbery charge and a battery charge and Alameda County tells me I’m not eligible for probation – why? Because I’m Black and I’m a slave and Black lives will never matter if stuff like this continues.”

To view more testimonies from prisoners, please visit www.srjsolidarity.org.

The Santa Rita Jail Hotline works directly with prisoners who have concerns about COVID-19, medical care, and jail conditions. The content of hotline calls suggests a very different reality than what is being presented to the public by the Alameda County Sheriff’s Office. If you are interested to become a hotline worker, please fill out this form: https://nlgsf.ourpowerbase.net/SRJ_Hotline_Volunteer_Form

SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING OF BLACK HUMANS CONTINUES TO TAKE PLACE IN JAILS AND COUNTIES – SUCH AS ALAMEDA COUNTY. IF BLACK LIVES REALLY MATTER, WHY CAN’T I GO HOME?