

3 new deaths reported in county due to COVID-19

BY MATT SZABO

Three new deaths have been reported in Orange County due to COVID-19, according to updated numbers released Tuesday by the Orange County Health Care Agency.

That brings the total

number of coronavirus-related deaths in the county to 42.

Overall, there are 2,151 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Orange County, including deaths. Thirty-four new cases were reported on Tuesday, the lowest number since Fri-

day. The cases are fairly well spread out by age, as 16% of those testing positive range from age 25-34. Fifteen percent range from ages 35-44, 19% from ages 45-54 and 18% from 55-64. The agency reported 1,390 tests for COVID-19 on Tuesday, which is the second-most tests given in a single day. To date, 27,737 tests have been administered.

There are 178 cases currently hospitalized, with 74 of those in the intensive-care unit. Both numbers represent the most in a single day during the pandemic, with 23 of 25 eligible hospitals reporting.

With the novel coronavirus pandemic ongoing, the agency also has announced a change in leadership. Dr. Clayton Chau has been named its new director, effective May 4.

Chau worked in the Health Care Agency's behavioral health division from 1999 to 2012 and was most recently the chief clinical and strategy officer for nonprofit Mind OC.

He replaces Richard Sanchez, who left in March to become interim CEO at CalOptima, which provides health insurance to the county's low-income residents.

Chau received his PhD in Clinical Psychology from Chelsea University in 2004, and his medical degree from the University of Minnesota.

The Fullerton resident is currently pursuing a master's degree in Sustainability Leadership at Claremont Lincoln University.

His past positions include senior medical director for health services at L.A. Care Health Plan, which is the largest non-profit health plan in the nation.

"The County of Orange and I are thrilled that Dr. Chau will be joining the HCA team," county CEO Frank Kim said in a news release. "Dr. Chau brings a wealth of experience to HCA, particularly within the realm of behavioral health. I look forward to working with him on tackling our greatest healthcare issues."



MONY SARY, left, and Henry Le work on processing COVID-19 tests at Pangea Lab in Costa Mesa on Friday.

Scott Smeltzer
Staff
Photographer

The health agency has a testing network throughout the region, including Huntington Beach, Santa Ana, Anaheim, Garden Grove, San Clemente and various UC Irvine Health locations.

Tests are being offered by appointment only to people who are symptomatic. For more information, visit ocovid19.ocaliforniahealthinfo.com.

Santa Ana remains the Orange County city with the highest case counts, with 313 cases reported.

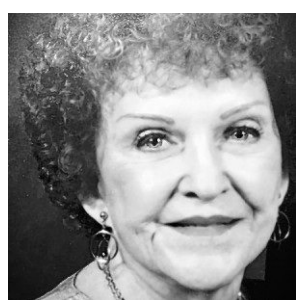
However, Laguna Beach has the most cases per capita, with 15.4 cases reported per 10,000 residents.

Here are the latest case counts for select cities, with their numbers per 10,000 residents:

- Anaheim: 289 (8.1 cases per 10,000 residents)
- Santa Ana: 313 (9.3 cases per 10,000 residents)
- Huntington Beach: 198 (9 cases per 10,000 residents)
- Irvine: 127 (4.5 cases per 10,000 residents)
- Newport Beach: 96 (11 cases per 10,000 residents)
- Laguna Beach: 36 (15.4 cases per 10,000 residents)
- Costa Mesa: 37 (3.2 cases per 10,000 residents)
- Fountain Valley: 29 (5.1 cases per 10,000 residents)

Updated figures are posted daily at ocovid19.ocaliforniahealthinfo.com/coronavirus-in-oc.

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Maryalice Wilson

December 25, 1919 - April 20, 2020

Maryalice Wilson - Age 100

Maryalice was born in Hollywood, California. She attended grade school in Los Angeles and graduated from Glendale High School. She received a business degree at Woodbury College, which helped her get a job as an executive secretary at Lockheed Aircraft in Burbank, CA in the 1940's. She was married to Robert "Bob" Wilson in 1939. While living in Glendale they welcomed daughter Carol, then son Randall. Their daughter Sherrie arrived after a move to Orange County, CA.

In 1948 they made a great decision to move to Costa Mesa, CA. Maryalice helped her husband, Bob, when he became president of the Costa Mesa Home Rule Committee. They circulated petitions, with others, to set up a vote to incorporate the city. Their business, The Awning Man, was opened in 1955. While running the business together, Bob started getting involved in politics. He served on the Costa Mesa Planning Commission for multiple terms, then on the City Council where he served three terms as mayor of Costa Mesa.

Maryalice was very involved in her children's school's PTA. She also attended all the school board meetings to make sure the board members (all men) made good decisions for the district's students. She later ran for the school board. She was a proud member of The Native Daughters of the Golden West and served as an officer. When the new Costa Mesa Hospital opened, she became a volunteer. As a lifelong Republican, she was a member of the Republican Women of Costa Mesa. In the 1950's she became a member of the first Baptist Church of Costa Mesa and later attended Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa.

As a representative for the city of Costa Mesa, her husband attended the California, National and International League of Cities conferences. Since Maryalice paid her own way, she was able to go along. They would take tours of the areas after the conferences ended, seeing many parts of the world. Later after retirement from their business and politics, they travelled extensively, taking multiple cruises and tours. One of their favorite trips was to visit every baseball stadium in the US and Canada. The Anaheim Angels were their team and they were season ticket holders from the start for many years. Maryalice had a wonderful smile and a great sense of humor. She was a great gardener and blessed with a "green thumb". In her middle years she played golf. Her beloved husband Bob passed away in 2004.

In her 100 years, she experienced so many wonderful events and witnessed many technological changes. She celebrated her 100th birthday in December at the Mesa Verde Country Club with all family members in attendance. Her family will miss her greatly, our matriarch is now with her Savior Jesus Christ and her husband. She is survived by her daughters Carol Wilt (Bob) of Cornville, AZ, Sherrie Makin (Claude) of Rancho Santa Margarita, CA, and son, Randy (Annika) of Billings, MT. She is also survived by her 8 grandchildren: Eric Erwin, Marc Erwin, Andrew Wilt, Matthew Makin, Mike Makin, Lori Wilson Fitzpatrick, Bryan Wilson, Brad Wilson and 14 great grandchildren.



Joan B. Kitchens

1932 - 2020

Joan B. Kitchens died March 1, 2020, at home in Newport Beach, with family present. She grew up in Schenectady, New York. As a girl, Joan fell in love with The West on a trip to visit grandparents in Montana and Colorado. She attended her father's alma mater, University of Colorado, Boulder. While there, she met and married Bill Kitchens of Tucson, Arizona, in 1952. They moved to the Newport-Costa Mesa area in 1956 and raised their family here. Bill predeceased her in 2009. Joan is survived by her children David (Leyda), Robert, Susan (Jan Martin), James, and Tom Kitchens, grandchildren Haley, Drew, Jeremy, Valerie, Tyra, Jake, nieces and nephews, and extended family.

While her children were young, Joan completed her English degree at Cal State Long Beach. She worked as a substitute teacher, but teaching was difficult with very young children at home. She found a more flexible alternative. Joan purchased a small house to rent out, and, in time, traded up to own multi-unit rentals. Joan performed as much hands-on maintenance as she could. (As her children grew older, she gave them summer/weekend jobs painting apartments between tenants). More than two decades after her first rental purchase, Joan put her paint rollers and brushes away after trading up to a professionally-managed rental located farther away.

In the early 1970s Joan and friends founded CRUD — Citizens to Recycle Usable Discards, an endeavor to recycle bottles and cans. She was a founding supporter of Newport Beach's Environmental Nature Center. She was a supporter of Friends of the Newport Bay, and gave naturalist walk-and-talks at both locations. In addition to local natural history, she was interested in Native American basketry and served as a docent at the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles.

Joan came from life-long learners and she passed on that tradition. She never met a museum she didn't like. The same is true for libraries, state parks, and national parks. Many a time she'd approach a museum guard and ask, "What's your favorite part of this exhibit?"

Joan saw worth in people no matter their background or station, and instilled that in her family. On vacation trips to Baja California, she instructed her children, "We are guests in their country; we treat the people with respect."

Joan was a bargain hunter. She taught two generations of offspring the finer points of thrift-shopping, including how to tell organic fabric (silk, cotton) from synthetic, by feel.

Joan's home and table were open to friends of her children. There are many who think of her as their second mother. Joan found ways to enrich the lives of her children, their friends, or nieces and nephews. Whether it was a thrift-shop find, an interesting library-sale book, a relevant newspaper clipping, or a road trip to visit a national park, she shared interests, knowledge, objects, and experiences. Always ready with a story or fact from a book she'd read, her trademark conversational hook was "And the INTERESTING thing is..."

Joan created and funded scholarships at Orange Coast College to memorialize family and dear friends. Many recipients are first-generation scholars.

Joan stayed active with water exercise. She said, "I even made a whole new set of friends in my 80s—my swim buddies." In her final weeks as she stared at a diagnosis of metastasized cancer, Joan repeatedly said, "I've had 87 good years. I feel very fortunate and I have no regrets."

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial tributes be made to: Newport Bay Conservancy newportbay.org. In light of COVID-19, plans for a memorial service are on hold until July. See susankitchens.com/joanmemorial for updates.

BEACHES

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several in Orange County have stayed open. That includes Newport Beach — which closed its large beach parking lots, piers, boardwalks and other coastal amenities starting in March but never closed its sand except for a stretch at the Wedge surfing spot — and Huntington Beach, which also closed its pier and parking but not its municipal beaches.

Now, local officials may revisit that access after seeing how many people answered the call of summery temperatures this weekend.

"There are lots of discussions right now at City Hall," Huntington Beach Councilwoman Kim Carr said Monday afternoon, saying the city is looking to get on the same page as the county and state.

"We will continue to evaluate the situation moving forward," Huntington Beach Mayor Lyn Semeta in a written statement, indicating that as long as the beaches surrounding Huntington City Beach remain open, the city will follow suit.

"Changes in accessibility at any of those beaches could impact the situation."

The Newport Beach City Council agreed Tuesday to keep the beaches open, rejecting the possibilities of closing the sand over the next three weekends, or, alternatively, closing roads leading to popular spots on the Balboa Peninsula and in Corona del Mar to control large gatherings during the continuing pandemic.

Leading up to that, not everyone was happy about the beach remaining open.

"They all have cabin fever and they want to get out [to the beach]," Balboa Peninsula resident Fred Levine said of the visitors. "Now's just not the right time. This weekend, with the amount of people that were down here ... it was pretty tough on the police. They did a great job, and the lifeguards did a great job, but there's only so much you can do when 15 people show up. You think, 'Please social distance, please social distance,' but when it's 85 degrees and there's a lot of

crowds, it just didn't happen."

On the flip side, Laguna Beach residents are ready to reopen.

The Laguna Beach City Council, which shut down its beaches, adjacent parks and trailheads on March 23, will tell city staff Tuesday if any adjustments should be made to the closures.

This does not affect county beaches such as Aliso Beach, which remains open though its parking lots were closed by the county.

Marine Safety Capt. Kai Bond said that there were still people attempting to go to the beach this weekend, the majority were aware that city beaches were closed and were passing them Mayor Pro Tem Steve Dicterow said he's received emails from residents regarding the closure of Laguna's beaches since March, but the warm weather led to a surge in his inbox. Residents wrote Dicterow upset that people are parking in their neighborhoods in order to walk to Aliso Beach.

"It's very unfortunate that the supervisors chose not to close" Aliso Beach and other county-owned beaches," he said. "It's making enforcement for us that much harder."

He said he's received support from constituents to keep beaches closed, but they are also concerned about the way the city enforces closures.

"Right now, [emails are] running about 10 to one saying that even though we've closed the beaches, we're not monitoring it enough," he said.

"All you have to do is look at the statistics for New York City and compare them to Orange County," Dicterow added. "You can see that when you get involved early and enforce it well the numbers are much lower. We want to keep it that way. Unfortunately, some people are having trouble sucking it up for a few weeks and don't seem to be considerate of other people's health."

Brent Ranek, a retired Newport Beach lifeguard captain, lives in the Newport Shores neighborhood. That was one of the main Newport communities affected by the lack of beach parking over the weekend.

NEWPORT

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cess to residents only, subject to identification verification at checkpoints. Those who live closest to the beaches on Balboa Peninsula and CdM said previously closed parking lots shifted the burden to their curbside parking and maintained a river of foot traffic a few feet from their front doors and patios, making them feel trapped in their homes. They called the turnout "chaos," "reckless," and a "disaster" and predicted a spike in infections in coming weeks.

Several of those advocating for closures described the weekend scene as re-

"A lot of people are upset, because you can't park by your house and you can't leave your house because of all the tourist parking," Ranek said. "They need to reopen the parking lots. People come to the beach no matter what; you're never going to stop it."

The rise in beach traffic was also noticed by nearby restaurants. Chronic Tacos, which has locations in the beach cities, reported "a definite spike in sales" over the weekend — especially at the Huntington Beach, Newport Beach and Corona del Mar stores, where stickers on the floor keep customers six feet apart while standing in line.

"It's kind of in line with a good summer day," said Dave Mohammed, the chain's director of marketing.

Jim Kalatschan of TK Burgers, which has locations in Huntington, Newport and Costa Mesa, said he was still getting numbers from the weekend but he anticipated an uptick in sales.

"It's just hard to tell because we're zero-contact," he added. "No one can come inside. People are in quarantine, so it feels busy, but when you look at the sales, they're not the same as they would be on a hot summer day, unfortunately."

"Our DoorDash is through the moon, for sure. It's crazy."

Newport Beach restaurant owner Mario Marovic said most of his popular local restaurants are closed, although Dory Deli, near Newport Pier, is offering take-out.

"Objectively speaking, the beaches probably should stay open," said Marovic, adding that he went to Blackies on Saturday with his wife and two daughters. "Beaches are healthy for the mind and the body. Quite frankly, my daughters were getting a little stir-crazy sitting in the house."

"I think it got a little bit overhyped that [the beaches] were so crowded. I feel that a lot of the residents are unhappy that there's a lot of parking going on in their neighborhoods, and I don't blame them. I would be unhappy too. Most of the public beach parking is closed ... so they're going to overflow

into the neighborhoods."

If Newport Beach was to close its beaches and would-be visitors were diverted to Huntington Beach, Huntington speculates that it would be overwhelmed by the crowd.

Over the weekend, the north side of the Huntington Beach pier saw increased lifeguard staffing on the beach — more than a typical weekend in April, said city spokesman Eric McCoy.

"We realize that we are at our max capacity level, given social distancing and parking closures," he said Monday.

"Yes, the beach was crowded, but for the most part, people were keeping a safe distance," McCoy said, acknowledging some bottlenecks at crosswalks, stairways and around the pier.

Huntington Beach Fire Department took to social media to "give a perspective of what's really going on at the beach," it said late Sunday on Facebook.

The department said that police and marine safety personnel were patrolling the beach over the weekend and gave hourly "social distancing reminders" via loudspeaker. Most beachgoers were adhering to the precautionary distancing measures, and those that weren't were given instruction, the department said. Public works employees were also on hand to mitigate crowds with barriers and signage.

Newport Beach Mayor Will O'Neill said he looked at aerial pictures posted on the Huntington Beach Police Department's Facebook page, which said visitors were complying with distancing guidelines. He said he asked Newport Beach Police Chief Jon Lewis, who was in the police helicopter on Saturday, and Fire Chief Jeff Boyles whether they agreed with those statements.

They both said that they agreed that the statement applied to Newport Beach as well, O'Neill said.

"The aerial photographs look very different from the side-angle lens photographs," he said.

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sembling the Fourth of July, a peak beach holiday.

But lifeguards' headcounts don't bear that out, the council found out Tuesday. Lifeguards estimated about 40,000 beachgoers in Newport on Friday and Saturday, at the high end of a normal, sunny weekend in April — compared to the 100,000-130,000 on the Fourth.

"Of course, nothing feels normal right now," O'Neill said. "This was very clearly a shock to the system."

He further argued that beach cities in Los Angeles County, which shut down all of its beaches on March 27, have higher per capita coronavirus infection rates than any coastal Orange County city with open

beaches, meaning closing beaches didn't insulate those communities, he said.

Malibu, for example, has 216 known cases of COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the virus, per 100,000 residents and Santa Monica has 167 per 100,000 people, according to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Newport has about 108 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 residents; neighboring Huntington Beach has 89 per 100,000 people, according to the OC Health Care Agency.

"We are in charge of the whole health of our whole community," O'Neill said.

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