



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 335, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101-2470

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: January 12, 2021

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

**FRAMEWORK FOR OUR FUTURE: A COLLABORATIVE, DATA-DRIVEN, AND
EQUITABLE RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

OVERVIEW

On February 14, 2020, the San Diego County Public Health Officer issued a Declaration of Local Health Emergency, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the first counties in the nation to take such a bold action. On March 19, 2020, the State of California public health officials issued an order for anyone living in the state to stay home, except for those providing essential services.

While the San Diego County Public Health Officer has been leading the response in San Diego County in a data-driven manner, in the months since the initial stay at home order in March 2020, this Board has undertaken various activities in opposition to the COVID-19 response. The previous Board has questioned the actions of San Diego County's Public Health Officer; written letters to the Governor in opposition of Executive Orders; and some Board members have openly advocated for the defiance of State and local Public Health orders. These actions have harmed our public health response and undermined confidence in our strategy.

COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted communities of color. Current county data shows that the case rates for minority populations are significantly higher than for their white counterparts. This disparity is especially pronounced in the Hispanic or Latino community. The same disparate impact is reflected by the data showing the distribution of cases by zip code, particularly the prevalence of cases in the South Bay and Southeastern San Diego. San Diego County has made great strides engaging with the community and determining new methods to improve outreach but focus and additional resources are required to continue to improve the scope of work.

Today's actions request the San Diego County Board of Supervisors adopt a resolution to reorient and restate our County's response to COVID-19; one that adheres to a continued, data-driven response; works collaboratively, rather than antagonistically with the State; and emphasizes a more

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equitable response to the pandemic by prioritizing future funding using a health equity lens when appropriate.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)
SUPERVISOR NATHAN FLETCHER AND SUPERVISOR NORA VARGAS**

- 1.) Adopt the attached resolution entitled A COLLABORATIVE, DATA-DRIVEN, AND EQUITABLE RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY, which outlines the science-based and equitable approach the County will pursue working in collaboration with State officials in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2.) Find that the policy statements contained in the attached resolution supersede any contradictory policy statement contained in past Board of Supervisors initiated resolutions and letters related to COVID-19.
- 3.) Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prioritize, when appropriate, the distribution of future COVID-19 response and recovery-related federal, state, and local funding based on a data-driven approach that identifies communities requiring the highest need of support based on positive COVID-19 cases and takes into account health equity tools that measure degree of disparities.

FISCAL IMPACT

This action will not have any current fiscal impact but contemplates prioritizing with an equity lens, when appropriate, the distribution of future allocations of COVID-19 response and recovery-related federal, state, and local funding based on highest need.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

This action will help support individuals, families and communities impacted by COVID-19.

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

On February 14, 2020, the San Diego County Public Health Officer issued a Declaration of Local Health Emergency, pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Section 101080 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the first counties in the nation to take such a bold action. By taking early action, the County signified our commitment to public health and preparation for the pandemic. On March 19, 2020, the State of California public health officials issued an order for anyone living in the state to stay home, except for those providing essential services.

Community transmission of COVID-19 in San Diego County remains a central concern of San Diego County's Public Health Department. The County made significant efforts early in the pandemic to "flatten the curve," slowing down the spread of the virus, which helped to avoid an increase in the cases that overwhelm the healthcare system. For this reason, the San Diego County

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Public Health Officer continues to issue and amend Public Health Orders to enhance efforts to protect the health of the public. Despite early success, San Diego County has experienced recent surges in positive cases, often tied to people ignoring or openly defying safety measures. These actions are due in part to fatigue with the long-standing situation, but also can be attributed to the mixed messages from elected officials at all levels whose statements and actions are sometimes in direct contradiction to the Public Health Orders. This irresponsible behavior has been detrimental to our region’s health and safety.

As of December 6, 2020, San Diego County, as part of the 11-county Southern California region and in response to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) bed capacity dipping below 15 percent, was placed on a more restrictive stay at home order by the State of California. As a result of the ICU bed trigger, further restrictions on activities outside of essential ones were put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19 and ease the pressure on the region’s hospital system.

As of January 2, 2021, in San Diego County, there have been 168,020 confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 and 1,592 deaths due to the virus. Hospitalized patients over the past 30 days have increased 93 percent and ICU patients over than same time have increased by 84 percent. The current capacity of the Southern California region ICU bed capacity is 0 percent.

COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted communities of color. Current county data shows that the case rates for these populations are significantly higher than for their white counterparts. This disparity is especially pronounced in the Hispanic or Latino community. As of January 2, 2021, 83,415 of COVID-19 cases, or 57.6 percent of the region’s total, were individuals who identified as Hispanic or Latino, while according to estimates from the US Census, only 34.1 percent of the county’s population is Hispanic or Latino.¹² That accounts for a rate of 7,629.1 per population of 100,000.³ Black San Diegans, as of January 2, 2021, account for 5,067 of San Diego COVID-19 cases, a case rate of 3,007.9 per 100,000.⁴ And while Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander individuals account for only 1.0 percent of San Diego County’s total COVID-19 cases, this equates to 9,765.8 cases per population of 100,000 for that ethnicity. As a comparison, San Diego County residents identifying as white have a rate of 2,429.5 population of 100,000.⁵

The same disparate impact is reflected by the data showing the distribution of cases by zip code, particularly the prevalence of cases in the South Bay and Southeastern San Diego.

¹ <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/Epidemiology/COVID-19%20Race%20and%20Ethnicity%20Summary.pdf>

² <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/sandiegocountycalifornia,CA/PST045219>

³ <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/Epidemiology/COVID-19%20Race%20and%20Ethnicity%20Summary.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/Epidemiology/COVID-19%20Race%20and%20Ethnicity%20Summary.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/Epidemiology/COVID-19%20Race%20and%20Ethnicity%20Summary.pdf>

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At the same time, these zip codes tend to be the areas with the most negative economic impact due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One reason is that many in these communities work in tourism and service jobs, sectors that have been particularly hard hit by the economic outcomes of the COVID-19 pandemic. While professional and business service jobs have started experiencing growth (additional 2,800 jobs between October and November 2020), there continues to be job loss in the leisure and hospitality sectors (900 additional losses during that same time period).⁶ An October 2020 report by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) noted that half of the 64,800 individuals who experienced job loss in the first six months of COVID-19 and identified as Hispanic or Latino were employed in the tourism sector.⁷ This impact is reflected in particularly high unemployment numbers in the same zip codes that have been experiencing high numbers of positive cases of COVID-19. For example, according to a recent report on the impact of the pandemic on the San Diego economy, zip codes in Logan Heights, Golden Hill, City Heights, National City, and San Ysidro had some of the highest percentage of unemployment in the region (ranging from 17.6 percent - 14.7 percent).⁸

The reasons for the disproportionate harmful impact of COVID-19 on communities of color are myriad and include: existing health disparities exacerbated by the pandemic and related to lack of equitable health access; absence of federal support of low-wage workers, leading to economic realities that required continuing in the workplace, even if situations are unsafe; higher likelihood of working in high-contact essential jobs that cannot be carried out remotely; prevalence of people of color in job sectors such as tourism and the service industry that have not yet made an economic recovery; and inequitable distribution of resources to those most impacted. San Diego County has made great strides engaging with the community and determining new methods to improve outreach but focus and additional resources are required to continue to improve this scope of work.

While the San Diego County Public Health Officer has been leading the response in San Diego County in a data-driven manner, in the months since the initial stay at home order in March 2020, the previous Board has undertaken various activities in opposition to the COVID-19 response. This Board has questioned the actions of San Diego County’s Public Health Officer; written letters to the Governor in opposition of Executive Orders; and some Board members have openly advocated for the defiance of State Public Health orders. These actions have harmed our public health response and undermined confidence in our strategy.

Furthermore, the Board has allocated funding across the region, but the emphasis has been on equal distribution rather than equitable distribution. As such, the underlying inequities are made starker.

Today’s actions request the San Diego County Board of Supervisors adopt a resolution to reorient and restate our County’s response to COVID-19, one that adheres to a continued, data-driven

⁶ [https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/file/lfmonth/sand\\$pds.pdf](https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/file/lfmonth/sand$pds.pdf)

⁷ https://sandag.org/uploads/publicationid/publicationid_4712_28193.pdf

⁸ https://www.sandag.org/uploads/publicationid/publicationid_4707_28033.pdf

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response, works collaboratively, rather than antagonistically with the State, and emphasizes a more equitable response to the pandemic.

Further, given the disproportionate impacts on people of color and zip codes associated with lower incomes, future COVID-19 response and recovery funding received by the County should prioritize these hardest hit areas and populations using a health equity lens when appropriate.

We urge your support.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed action to restate the County's response to the COVID-19 pandemic based on priorities of equity, collaboration, and data-driven science supports the Healthy Families, Safe Communities, and Operational Excellence Strategic Initiatives in the County of San Diego's 2020-25 Strategic Plan by ensuring that the response protects the health of San Diegans with a particular focus on those populations and areas of the county that are most negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Respectfully submitted,



NATHAN FLETCHER
Supervisor, Fourth District



NORA VARGAS
Supervisor, First District

ATTACHMENT(S)
RESOLUTION

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AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

REQUIRES FOUR VOTES: Yes No

WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED

 Yes No

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:

December 8, 2020 (6) Receive Update on the COVID-19 Response, Ratify Actions, and Authorize Any Other Action Necessary to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic; November 17, 2020 (8), Receive Update on the COVID-19 Response, Ratify Actions, and Authorize any other Action Necessary to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic; October 27, 2020 (3), Receive Update on the COVID-19 Response, Ratify Actions, Adopt a Resolution, Approve Implementation of Fully Funding Capital Projects that were Put on Hold Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and Authorize any other Action Necessary to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic; October 13, 2020 (14), Resolution Requesting Local Consultation and the Use of Hospital Capacity Metrics for California’s COVID-19 Health Order; October 13, 2020 (3), Receive Update on the COVID-19 Response, Ratify Actions and Authorize any other Action Necessary to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic; September 29, 2020 (5), Receive Update on the COVID19 Response, Ratify Actions, and Authorize any other Action Necessary to Address the COVID19 Pandemic; September 22, 2020 (2), Receive Update on Discussions with the State of California as it Relates to San Diego County’s COVID-19 Metrics; September 15, 2020 (7), Receive Update on the COVID-19 Response, Ratify Actions, Receive Update on Allocation of CARES Act Funds for Testing, Tracing and Treatment, Authorize Acceptance of COVID-19 Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity Enhancing Detecting Funding, Authorize a Single Source Contract with the University of California, San Diego, and Authorize any Actions Necessary to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic; September 15, 2020 (6), Receive Presentation of the San Diego County Region as it Relates to the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic; August 4, 2020 (4), Receive Update on the COVID-19 Response, Ratify Actions, Receive Update on the Costs Associated with Engaging a Third-Party Statistician, and Authorize any other Action Necessary to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic; August 4, 2020 (3), Approve Proposal for the Allocation of \$48.8 Million in CARES Act Funding, Establish Appropriations to Support Proposal Allocations, and Receive Update on the Feasibility of Funding for Testing at the United States/Mexico Border; July 7, 2020 (4), Receive Update on the COVID-19 Response, Ratify Actions and Authorize Any Other Action Necessary to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic; June 23, 2020 (4), Receive Update on the COVID-19 Response, Ratify Actions and Authorize Any Other Action Necessary to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic, and Establish Appropriations to Support Proposed Actions; June 2, 2020 (4), Receive Update On The COVID-19 Response, Ratify Actions And Authorize Any Other Action Necessary To Address The COVID-19 Pandemic; May 19, 2020 (5), Receive Update On The COVID-19 Response, Ratify Actions and Adopt a Resolution Waiving Certain Fees, and Authorize Any Other Action Necessary to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic; May 19, 2020 (19), Approve amendments to Board of Supervisors Policy G-16 and the Capital Improvement Needs Assessment (CINA) Program prioritizing County of San Diego (County) Capital projects for Fiscal Years 2020-2025; May 5, 2020 (2), Receive Update on the COVID-

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19 Response, Ratify Actions, and Authorize Any Other Action Necessary to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic, and take the necessary steps to implement options waiving fees in Planning & Development Services and Department of Environmental Health; April 21, 2020 (2), Receive Update on the COVID-19 Response, Ratify Actions, and Authorize Any Other Action Necessary to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic; April 7, 2020 (4), Receive Update on the COVID-19 Response, Ratify Actions, Execute Leases and Licenses of Real Property, Direct Renters to be Entitled to Rent Deferral and a Moratorium on Eviction, and Authorize Any Other Action Necessary to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic; March 24, 2020 (21), Receive Update on the COVID-19 Response, Authorize the CAO to Apply for, Accept, and Execute any Grant, Gift or Revenue Agreement in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and Ratify Actions Taken by the CAO, Public Health Officer, and Director of the Department of Purchasing and Contracting; March 24, 2020 (19), Protecting Tenants, Homeowners, and Small Businesses Affected by the Novel Coronavirus Pandemic in the Unincorporated Area; March 10, 2020 (2), Review and Continue Local Health Emergency and Local Emergency; February 19, 2020 (01), Ratify Proclamation of Local Emergency and Ratify Declaration of Local Health Emergency Regarding COVID-19.

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:

N/A

BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:

N/A

MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:

N/A

ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION NUMBER(S):

N/A

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: Fourth and First Districts of the Board of Supervisors

OTHER CONCURRENCE(S): N/A

CONTACT PERSON(S):

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