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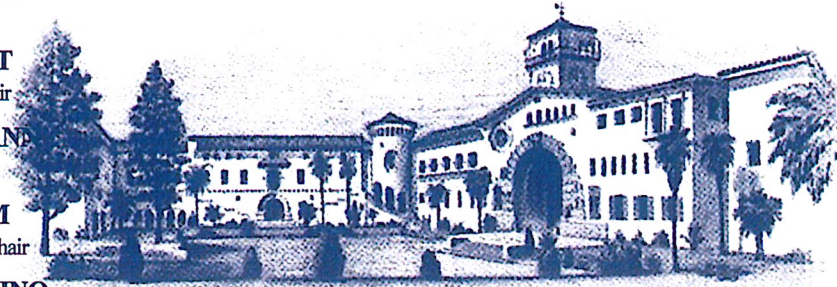
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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

May 12, 2020

Honorable Governor Gavin Newsom
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dr. Sonia Angel
Director, California Department of Public Health
PO Box 997377, MS 0500
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

Re: Request for Local Discretion in Metrics for Readiness and Exclusion of Lompoc Prison Inmates for Attestation

Dear Honorable Governor Newsom and Dr. Angel,

Thank you for all your efforts to protect the health of all Californians during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and community supported your Stay at Home Order issued on March 19 to "flatten the curve". As a county, we are adhering to the Executive Order and thus doing our part to ensure the stability of state, the viability of our local health care system, and the safeguarding of the most vulnerable among us from COVID-19.

We are writing today respectfully; but we emphatically disagree with your proposed variance metrics for Stage 2. The variance metrics of 1 case per 10,000 in the last 14 days and 0 deaths in the last 14 days do not holistically capture the Santa Barbara County capacity to safeguard our health care system and our ability to protect our vulnerable populations. In our county, these two metrics penalize us for the prevalence of the disease in dense, incarcerated living environments, and the aging and medically fragile communities with multiple co-morbidities contributing to adverse outcomes.

Variance Metric: 1 case per 10,000 in the last 14-day period:

One case per 10,000 in the last 14 is a conflicting approach given the State's mandate to increase daily testing to 1.5 per 1,000. For Santa Barbara County, this means roughly no more than 45 new cases in a 14-day period during the same period with increased testing efforts. As a result, we anticipate the number of cases to increase as we ramp up our testing capacity. Thus, we support the more reasonable approach that was shared earlier by your administration: less than 10% positivity rate in our tests. This is a more achievable than the one case per 10,000 metric.

We are also requesting that the attestation process allow Santa Barbara County to exclude cases from the Federal Penitentiary in Lompoc. Currently the County positivity rate is 11%, and based on the current mass testing efforts at the prison, their positivity rate is 67%. Santa Barbara County has no authority over this population, and while we have worked diligently in offering our assistance, we have no authority to impose disease mitigation strategies. The county readily accepts the staff who work at the prison facility as community members, and cases among prison staff will continue to be counted as community cases.

Variance Metric: Zero death in the last 14-day period:

Given the demographics of Santa Barbara County, the variance metric of zero deaths in the last 14-day period is not reasonable given our demographics. Our county population includes 15% of over 65 years of age; 6% with diabetes; 27% with hypertension; 5% with COPD, Emphysema, or Chronic Bronchitis; 13% with asthma; and 23% with obesity. These are underlying health conditions that increase likelihood of poor outcomes when combined with COVID-19 infection. We propose a more reasonable metric of a 2% fatality rate, which is 50% less than the current 4% fatality rate in California cases.

Santa Barbara County's Capacity to Accelerate

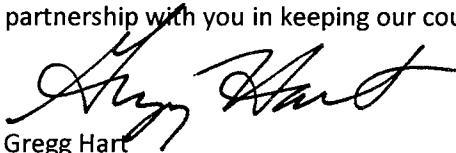
Through data and constant monitoring, Santa Barbara County is confident that we have the capacity to meet the remaining elements in the variance document:

- Capacity across hospitals and primary care and specialty services to care for people who are ill and those who need routine health care
 - Provide adequate staffing, ventilators, and PPE to resume routine care and maintain surge capacity
 - Ability of hospitals to activate surge capacity when needed
 - Offer routine COVID-19 testing for health care workers and patients as appropriate
 - Ensure protections for vulnerable populations (i.e. elderly, people with underlying health conditions, residents in institutional settings, people with poor access to needed services and supports)
- Adequate numbers of trained staff and PPE to appropriately manage care at institutional settings
 - Build capacity to isolate and quarantine residents who reside in institutional settings either at their home institution or an appropriate designated facility
 - Offer routine COVID-19 testing of employees and residents at institutional settings with one or more positive cases
 - Ensure daily updates from residential healthcare and detention facilities on their total facility census and number of COVID-19 positive residents and staff
- Capacity for testing, isolating, and quarantining individuals and surveillance to prevent the spread of infection. This includes:
 - Capacity to test all symptomatic people and obtain timely results
 - Capacity to test employees and residents in congregate living facilities with one or more positive cases
 - Capacity to isolate individuals with a positive test result, ensuring they are connected to care, and to obtain information on close contacts

- Capacity to trace and quarantine close contacts, especially those at high risk of severe illness and/or spreading the infection
- Capacity to offer isolation and quarantine locations for those without resources
- Capacity for Public Health Department to electronically collect and analyze data, including information on race and ethnicity, from hospitals, care providers, testing sites and labs to inform practices, protocols, and status updates.
- Ensure capacity to maintain maximum physical distancing and infection control at all spaces and places where individuals interact with each other outside of their homes
- Continue the issuance of Health Officer Orders (HOOs) that direct employers, employees, and individuals to adhere to public health measures for infection control and physical distancing
- Ensure that businesses purchase supplies and equipment necessary to protect their employees and customers.
- Provide individuals, organizations, and businesses with educational materials, guidance and, technical assistance to facilitate compliance with Health Officer Orders
- Collaborate with community partners to leverage additional tools to ensure compliance with Health Officer Orders as appropriate

As the Board of Supervisors, we urge to consider the two metrics outlined above, and allow local flexibility in measuring our readiness by utilizing a) less than 10% positivity of tests performed and b) a 2% case fatality rate. We also urge that you allow us to exclude inmate cases from the Federal Penitentiary in Lompoc from our attestation numbers. Note that with CDPH being in the process of determining case definitions for what constitutes a COVID-19 related death, there is opportunity to consider the manner in which we qualify cause of death among the elderly and fragile.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to receiving your response and continuing our partnership with you in keeping our county safe, while restarting our local economy.



Gregg Hart
Chair, Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

Cc:
Honorable Senator Hannah Beth Jackson
Honorable Assemblymember Monique Limon
Honorable Assemblymember Jordan Cunningham
Cliff Berg, Governmental Advocates
Santa Barbara County, Unified Command
Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer