



August 30, 2021

SENT VIA E-MAIL to Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

Bob Nelson, Board Chair, Fourth District
Das Williams, First District
Gregg hart, Second District
Joan Hartmann, Third District
Steve Lavagnino, Fifth District

Cc: Mona Miyasato, CEO

SUBJECT: Agenda Item D.5 County of Santa Barbara Employee COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing Policy

Dear Chair Nelson and Supervisors,

The League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara (the League) strongly supports the proposed **County of Santa Barbara Employee COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing Policy** for all County employees as a way to ensure that County employees are not putting the community at risk. As the Delta variant cases continue to climb and a U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved vaccine is now available, there is no reason for the County to delay the mandate.

While Cal/OSHA workplace safety guidelines still require indoor masking and safe distancing, each County Department seems to have differing requirements. The proposed County of Santa Barbara Employee COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing Policy will ensure uniform enforceability.

Community protection depends on herd immunity in our community and we have not achieved that as yet. Children remain ineligible and other vulnerable, immunocompromised community members remain at risk.

Until more people are vaccinated against COVID-19, to ensure the safety of our employees and the public, masking and safe distancing within County facilities should be required at all times, regardless of vaccination status.

We agree with staff recommendation that, in coordination with the Human Resources and Public Health Departments, all County Departments will be responsible for ensuring that their employees, interns, volunteers, and any contractors who regularly work onsite, comply with this policy.

In addition, we urge the Board to delegate authority to the CEO to modify these requirements in accordance with the most current guidance provided by the Santa Barbara County Health Department and other applicable authorities without having to come to the Board of Supervisors for further direction.

In addition, there are other factors that County must address:

- Cleaning, disinfecting & hygiene according to CDC guidelines.
- Working with employees and public with chronic, high-risk medical conditions who need extra accommodations to stay safe.
- Working with employees and public with disabilities and Black, Indigenous and People of Color and others who are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 who need behavioral health and emotional support.

The League thanks Supervisor Gregg Hart for his leadership and urges the Board to take a strong stance for disease prevention and health maintenance on all the County premises and in the community.

Sincerely,



Vijaya Jammalamadaka
President,
League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara