

Ramirez, Angelica

From: Valencia Sherratt, Lisa
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 2:34 PM
To: sbcob
Cc: Melissa Smith
Subject: Public Comment for A21 intended to be voiced today



Categories: Public Comment

Hello Clerk of the Board,
 I'm passing on the public comment of Dr. Smith that she was planning to give via phone.
 Can you please confirm that this will become part of the record as public comment?
 Thanks for working so hard on another crazy day of virtual civic engagement in a pandemic...
 Lisa

Good morning, Chair Hart and Members of the Board,

Thank you so much for your important leadership during the pandemic.

I am Dr. Melissa Smith, interim coordinator of the Latinx and Indigenous Migrant COVID-19 Response Task Force. I am also director of Health Equity Initiatives at UC Santa Barbara, and have worked as a part-time family medicine physician in the health department's clinic in Santa Maria. I recently served as the Chair of the Expert health Care panel for the RISE guide.

I believe it is critically important that some of the CARES money be allocated to the work of the Task Force. Our efforts began in March of this year, as the pandemic emerged and we have been meeting on a weekly basis since then. Our Task Force includes over 60 participating organizational cross-sectoral partners including CBO's, health service providers, elected officials, and the County departments of health and behavioral wellness, among others.

Our efforts are focused on addressing the urgent needs of community members who have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Farmworkers and Mental Health Working Groups have developed Action Plans that are ready to be implemented.

We are focusing our efforts on critically needed multi-lingual and culturally appropriate health education and outreach efforts in marginalized communities in our County, as well as with growers. We are also strengthening coordination among service providers to address gaps and to ensure that community members receive life-saving supplies like face coverings, hand sanitizers, food during self-quarantine, and other case-management resources. We are providing mental health support services and resources in multiple languages for youth and adults throughout the county.

Many of us are working as volunteers, trying to fill critical gaps that have been identified by community members we serve. We are writing grants for urgently needed funds to support our efforts. Our Task Force is organized, passionate and powerful. However, we can't do this work without vitally needed resources, that are beyond those of non-profit budgets.

The CARES funds are urgently needed to support the valuable county-community partnership of the Task Force, whose efforts are an addition to, and complement those efforts led by the health department.

These CARES funds are an investment in the health and well-being of our *entire* county, as well as an investment in our economy and our workforce. *All* of our lives, in particular those who are most vulnerable to COVID-19, depend on this critically needed public support.

Thank you,

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Women's Health, Gender and Empowerment Center of Expertise

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