



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 21, 2020

Contact: Jolena Voorhis
(209) 468-2997/ jvoorhis@sjgov.org

San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors Receive COVID-19 Update and Adopt Actions

STOCKTON – The San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors met today to hear the following COVID-19 updates:

Update on COVID-19 Pandemic in San Joaquin County

- San Joaquin County Interim Public Health Officer, Dr. Maggie Park, was confirmed today as the official Public Health Officer Effective April 27, 2020. Dr. Park responded to the confirmation stating, “I am so grateful for the outpouring of support I’ve received from the community, and I’m thankful to have the confidence of the Board. I am looking forward to the work that lies ahead and to building collaborations with the San Joaquin County community.”
- Dr. Park gave a presentation on the COVID-19 pandemic in San Joaquin County. She noted that currently there are 449 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in San Joaquin County with 18 COVID-related deaths. She provided an overview of several high-profile national studies to further guide how the County could gradually reopen. She said the County will closely follow State guidance by Governor Newsom to make that determination which includes the six objective measures that the State will follow to start reopening parts of the economy and relaxing mitigation strategies. Dr. Park is also reviewing correspondence and documentation from the business community to consider reopening certain industries and helping prepare safety protocols for businesses to reopen once restrictions are lifted.
- Tony Vartan, Director of the Department of Behavioral Health Services said they have implemented the following measures to ensure continuity of care for the mental health services in our community: 1) The department has been providing continued onsite services including remote telephonic and telehealth services and 5150 evaluations; 2) All clinics remain open using social distancing practices and personal protective equipment to keep staff and the public safe; 3) Providing services, assessments, support, education and resources in homeless shelters and encampments; 4) Providing 24/7 access through an adult crisis line at (209) 468-8686, a non-emergency warm line for those in need of non-emergent support at (209) 468-3585, a dedicated COVID Warm line for Youth at (209) 468-3685, and WebEx for Court Hearings for patients who are being treated involuntarily ; and 5) The department also is launching youth and caregiver Telehealth support groups this week.
- Dan Burch, the San Joaquin County EMS Agency Administrator and Medical Health Operational Area Coordinator, reported to the Board that on April 20, 2020, hospitals in San Joaquin County reported 29 hospitalized COVID-19 positive patients. Of those patients hospitalized, 17 required intensive care. Mr. Burch reported that as of April 21, 2020, all the hospitals in San Joaquin County report having adequate N-95

respirators and other PPE available for use by staff. He said it is worth noting that simple procedure masks/surgical masks remain in short supply and high demand and many providers have had to enact workaround solutions. The County's medical/health mutual aid system continues to work closely with regional and state partners to fulfill requests from hospitals, long term care facilities, first responders, and others for PPE, medical equipment and medical supplies.

Mr. Burch also shared a message from the EMS Medical Director, Dr. Katherine Shafer, who is concerned that residents have heeded the "Stay at Home" Order too successfully and are delaying medical care when it is needed. Dr. Shafer shared that people have taken to heart the stay at home message so well that patients are not reaching out to their doctors or even emergency departments when it is truly necessary. Dr. Shafer wants everyone to know that hospitals and physicians are ready and available to meet the needs of patients requiring medical care and encourages people to call their doctor for urgent medical issues and seek to help through the emergency department or 911 EMS system for serious or potentially life threatening emergencies. Dr. Shafer says people should never delay seeking medical attention when experiencing signs of a stroke, heart attack, or respiratory difficulty.

- Zienna Blackwell-Rodriquez, the Director of San Joaquin County Public Health Services, reported that their Department is working on a COVID-19 dashboard that will be launched on their [website](#). It will have a wide variety of information including the number of cases by Supervisorial district along with the number of hospitalizations, deaths, outbreaks and other relevant data. Blackwell-Rodriquez said they will continue to add maps as they are developed (e.g. zip code, demographics).
- The Board of Supervisors also approved the Health Care Services Director to sign COVID-19 Crisis Response funding invoices with the California Department of Public Health for provision of COVID-19 Crisis Response in the amount of \$672,996 which was provided through the federal Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2020. This funding is intended for Public Health Services to carry out surveillance, epidemiology, laboratory capacity, infection control, mitigation, communications, and other preparedness and response activities between March 5, 2020 through March 15, 2021.
- The BOS retroactively adopted a resolution authorizing the San Joaquin County Department of Veteran Services to temporarily close the County Veterans Services Office to the public in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to remotely provide essential services effective March 23, 2020. All essential services that are provided by the department such as assisting veterans in applying for and receiving benefits, providing information to veterans and their families, and providing follow-up calls related to claims and benefits advocacy will continue and are being provided remotely by email, fax, phone, and electronic submission. There have been no changes to Veterans Affairs Healthcare services other than group therapy (provided via telephone or Skype) and tours. Routine healthcare appointments are provided via secure messaging and telemedicine.

"I applaud Dr. Park, County staff, all frontline personnel, our local cities and partners who are working around-the-clock to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and keep our communities secure and healthy," said San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors Chair, Kathy Miller. "From delivering life-saving health and mental health services, to providing essential services, to supporting our most vulnerable populations, to preparing for the reopening of businesses and our economy, these heroes are working tirelessly to ensure the well-being and safety of all San Joaquin County residents and we are grateful for their contributions and sacrifices."

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