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San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors Receive COVID-19 Updates
Community is Strongly Encouraged to Continue Social Distancing in Order to Remain Open

STOCKTON – Yesterday, the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors received an update on the COVID-19 pandemic in San Joaquin County, provided direction to staff, and approved related actions.

Dr. Maggie Park, San Joaquin County Public Health Officer reported to the Board that the State recently released guidance on the next stage of reopening of businesses and community activities beginning June 12. According to the California Department of Public Health, beginning June 12, with the county health officer’s approval following their review of local epidemiological data, rate of test positivity and local preparedness to support a health care surge, vulnerable populations, contact tracing and testing, the State is allowing the reopening of the following potential activities in two categories:

Category 1 (Low-risk activities)

- Schools
- Day Camps
- Casinos/Card rooms/Racetracks
- Campgrounds/Outdoor recreation
- Hotels for leisure

Category 2 (Higher-risk activities)

- Film/TV/Music production
- Pro Sports with no spectator audience
- Bars and wineries
- Gyms and pools
- Zoos and museums
- Movie theaters/Family recreation centers

Park cautioned the Board that the reopening of any of these activities might be in jeopardy since the State is now monitoring San Joaquin County due to increased COVID-19 hospitalizations and projected limits in hospital capacity due to factors such as 1) community transmission due to gatherings, 2) workplace transmission followed by household transmission; 3) skilled nursing facility outbreaks; and 4) increase in widespread testing.

Park noted that the two State metrics the County is not meeting include increased hospitalization rates and ICU bed availability. San Joaquin County recently experienced a 40.7 percent increase in hospitalizations over a three-day period which is above the State threshold of 10 percent and have 14.1 percent of licensed ICU beds available for COVID-19 patients where the State minimum is 20 percent. The County currently has 43 COVID-19 patients being treated in local hospitals which is 20 people above the State limit. 18 of those hospitalized patients are in the ICU. San Joaquin County is also not testing at the minimum average tests per day level required by the State which is 150 tests per 100,000 population per day on average.

Dr. Park said she submitted a draft set of key action steps that the County will be taking to address State monitoring concerns which include: 1) increase public messaging on the importance of personal protection measures and the risks involved with mass gatherings in multiple languages; 2) continuing to provide infection prevention expertise to assist skilled nursing facilities infection control practices, ensure baseline testing and initiate proper use of personal protection equipment. Park also said she is working closely with the State to meet the metrics in order to be removed from the State monitoring list and be able to begin opening further activities in accordance with the State's Reopening Plan on June 12 or consider any potential delays or staging for more risky sectors until the metrics are met.

"I know everyone is tired of COVID-19 at this point, but COVID-19 isn't tired of us and this virus isn't going away anytime soon," Dr. Park stated. "It is imperative that we continue meeting the required attestation metrics in order to continue progressing through the reopening stages outlined by the State. Otherwise we may be looking at a situation where businesses and activities could shut down and deaths rates climb sharply."

Dr. Park said the following State-mandated orders still apply to all California residents:

- Mass gatherings of any number of people are prohibited.
 - Residents can leave their homes to engage with businesses and activities allowed by the State.
 - Businesses and sectors of the economy that open are required to follow State guidance.
 - To prevent further spread of COVID-19:
 - Everyone must continue to observe social distancing protocols, minimize time outside their homes, wash their hands frequently, and are encouraged to wear masks in public.
 - All Californians should not travel significant distances and should stay close to their homes.
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- The Board authorized \$73,500 for the purchase of laboratory equipment to increase testing capacity related to COVID-19. Much of the testing will be devoted to local skilled nursing facilities that are at risk for outbreaks.
 - The Board also heard a presentation from Brandi Hopkins, Director of Human Resources, about County employee safety and working conditions since reopening County buildings on May 18. Hopkins said the following measures are taking place: Personal protection and sanitation devices are being offered to employees; barrier protections have been installed; social distancing decals have been placed in customer and non-customer areas, a Countywide employee communications campaign has been implemented through the COVID-19 employee website and weekly communications; public traffic is being closely monitored to ensure social distancing; employees are continually encouraged to stay home when sick and making sure they know where to get tested for COVID-19 if needed; alternative work schedules and telework options are being provided to employees, risk management safety measures and OSHA guidelines are being monitored; Department managers are meeting on a regular basis to discuss screening measures, workplace safety and other worker safety issues; and Human Resources plans to distribute an employee survey to assess worker safety.
 - Jerry Becker, Assistant County Administrator and the County Auditor-Controller, Jerome Wilverding, updated the Board about CARES Act Funding and the distribution of \$15 million through the Board-approved Small Business Assistance Grant Program. The program was established to reimburse small businesses and nonprofits for businesses interruption costs related to COVID-19. Mr. Becker informed the Board that since the County opened the Small Business Assistance Grant Program on June 1, 2020, more than 307 businesses submitted funding requests totaling over \$7.1 million. He said small businesses, including health care providers and nonprofits, can submit a grant request for actual costs incurred because of COVID-19. Becker said staff intends to use social media advertising to increase public awareness as well as direct outreach to local cities. The Board

also heard from the County Independent Auditor who emphasized the need for an independent third party to award grant funding to ensure that the CARES Act Funding is allocated appropriately.

Kathy Miller, Chair of the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors, responded to the presentation by stating, "It's good to see that the word is getting out among our business community about this grant funding. This money will provide tremendous support to businesses that are on the brink of closing or have been severely impacted due to COVID-19," Miller said. "The County is working hard to make sure small businesses and others know about the grant funding; are able to accurately complete and submit their requests; can trust that an independent third party will assess all grant requests; and that funding gets out the door quickly and into the hands of people who need it most."

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