

*The Board of Supervisors of
Contra Costa County, California*

In the matter of:

Resolution No. 2021/337

Declaring COVID-19 Misinformation as a Public Health Crisis

WHEREAS, Health misinformation has significantly undermined public health efforts and the unmitigated proliferation of health misinformation has created a culture of mistrust and has prolonged the COVID-19 pandemic, endangering the health and safety of all Contra Costa County residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has resulted in over 95,000 cases and 921 deaths in Contra Costa County as of September 25, 2021; and

WHEREAS, The spread of COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on our health and safety, our regional economy, our elder residents, our communities of color, our mental health, the educational development of our children and every aspect of our lives; and

WHEREAS, In Contra Costa County, there are significantly lower vaccination rates for residents 20-29 years old, residents who identify themselves as White, Latinx, African-American, and more than one race/ethnicity, men, and in certain communities across the county and particularly in East and West County; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 vaccines have met the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) rigorous scientific standards for safety, effectiveness, and manufacturing quality and have been proven to be safe and effective; and

WHEREAS, The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, brand name Comirnaty, has received full FDA approval and been proven to be highly effective in preventing serious disease, hospitalization and death from COVID-19 and that its benefits outweigh its risks; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 vaccine is available to everyone in Contra Costa County at no cost, regardless of income, residency within the county, health coverage or immigration status, and is administered by health professionals, like nurses and doctors; and

WHEREAS, misinformation has caused confusion and has led to eligible people declining COVID-19 vaccines, rejecting public health measures such as face coverings and physical distancing, and using unproven treatments; and

WHEREAS, On July 15, 2021, the United States Surgeon General issued his first advisory describing the "urgent threat" posed by the rise of false information of COVID-19 – one that continues to put "lives at risk" and prolong the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Recent surges in infections and hospitalizations from COVID-19 in Contra Costa have highlighted the importance of clear and unequivocal communications from public officials that vaccines are the best protection against severe illness and hospitalizations; and

WHEREAS, Urgent action is needed to curb the spread of COVID-19 by combating misinformation, thereby supporting our healthcare system and saving lives; and

WHEREAS, There would be substantial detriment on Contra Costa County and its residents and visitors if not acted upon immediately; and

WHEREAS, Trusted community members, such as health professionals, faith leaders, educators, and leaders of Black, Indigenous, Latinx and other communities of color nationwide and in Contra Costa have spoken directly to their communities to address

COVID-19 related questions by town halls, meetings, social media, and traditional media; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Supervisors and the County of Contra Costa is troubled by and actively discourages the spread of COVID-19 misinformation as it is a dangerous threat to public health; and

WHEREAS, Contra Costa Health Services continues to carry out its mission to care for and protect all Contra Costa County residents from COVID-19, especially our most vulnerable; and

WHEREAS, Contra Costa Health Services engages with our communities through building partnerships and trust with community organizations and residents, trusted messengers, and COVID-19 Ambassadors; and

WHEREAS, Contra Costa Health Services maintains a coronavirus website as a source of credible, up-to-date information regarding COVID-19 for Contra Costa residents at cchealth.org.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors of Contra Costa County declares that COVID-19 health misinformation is an urgent public health crisis affecting our entire community and the County of Contra Costa commits to combating health misinformation and curbing the spread of falsehoods that threaten the health and safety of our residents; and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Board of Supervisors and the County of Contra Costa will develop and support policies and strategies that protect the health and safety of Contra Costa County residents through the promotion of evidence-based interventions, including face coverings and vaccination; and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Contra Costa Health Services will continue to share facts and scientific information about COVID-19, to correct misinformation including vaccine myths, to identify and give a platform to culturally relevant medical experts and trusted messengers, to respond to questions and requests for information on social media, and to work with our media and community partners to reach a broad audience with factual, timely information.

DIANE BURGIS

Chair, District III Supervisor

JOHN GIOIA

District I Supervisor

CANDACE ANDERSEN

District II Supervisor

KAREN MITCHOFF

District IV Supervisor

FEDERAL D. GLOVER

District V Supervisor

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an action taken and entered on the minutes of the Board of Supervisors on the date shown.

ATTESTED: October 12, 2021

Monica Nino, County Administrator

By: _____, Deputy