



Contra
Costa
County

To: Board of Supervisors

From:

Date: May 12, 2020

Subject: Update on COVID-19

RECOMMENDATION(S):

CONSIDER update on COVID 19; and PROVIDE direction to staff.

1. Update by County Treasurer-Tax Collector, Russell Watts, on Executive Order suspending the property tax penalty
- 2.

☒ APPROVE

☐ OTHER

☒ RECOMMENDATION OF CNTY
ADMINISTRATOR

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD
COMMITTEE

Action of Board On: **05/12/2020** ☒ APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED ☐ OTHER

Clerks Notes:

**VOTE OF
SUPERVISORS**

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: May 12, 2020

Contact: David Twa, County Administrator and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: , Deputy

cc:

RECOMMENDATION(S): (CONT'D)

Health Department - Anna Roth, Director and Dr. Farnitano, Health Officer

- Budget, Labor, and Operational Issues - David Twa, County Administrator

FISCAL IMPACT:

Administrative reports with no specific fiscal impact.

BACKGROUND:

The Health Services Department has established a website dedicated to COVID-19, including daily updates. The site is located at: <https://www.coronavirus.cchealth.org/>

CLERK'S ADDENDUM

Treasurer-Tax Collector

Mr. Watts said that last week Governor Newsom announced Executive Order N-6120 to address the issue of taxpayers unable to pay their taxes on time due to the Covid-19 pandemic or related health orders. EO N-6120 suspends certain sections of the tax code that required tax collectors to impose the late payment penalty.

The late payment penalty will be cancelled if four conditions are met:

1. The property is owner occupied or is owned and operated by a small business;
2. The taxes in question became delinquent after the State of Emergency was announced March 4, 2020 not prior to that date;
3. The taxpayer has timely filed a claim or request for penalty cancellation with the Tax Collector's office on the prescribed form (available online);
4. Taxpayer demonstrates to the Tax Collector's satisfaction that the taxpayer was affected by the Covid-19 or related health orders and was unable to pay the taxes because of these;

The Treasurer-Tax Collector website has been updated with the Executive Order. The order extends the time to pay the April 10, 2020, December 2020 or April 2021 installment of property taxes up to May 6, 2021. Each installment will be handled separately – a separate form for each request for penalty cancellation.

Health Services

Ms. Roth reported that Contra Costa has currently conducted 18, 669 tests. There are 1048 confirmed cases, 20 hospitalizations of which 8 are in the ICU, 894 recoveries, and 32 have died. This day or tomorrow the number of recoveries will begin showing on the cchealth.org website.

Last week the seven Bay Area Health Officers extended the shelter in place to May 31, 2020.

Health officers provided five indicators to be in place to lift the shelter in place:

1. A decline in cases : There are slightly over 1000 cases in CCC, reflecting an average of 11 to 15 cases a day over the last two weeks. No new cases were reported yesterday; The Bay Area six county region reports a 7 percent decline over the last two weeks. Secured 586 hotel rooms for homeless and 136 rooms for health care workers
2. Sufficient hospital capacity: In addition to alternative care sites now in place, the County has obtained five hotel sites with a total of 586 hotel rooms to serve the homeless, as well as two hotels (137 rooms) for health care workers. Both groups can take on Covid-19 positive people if it is needed.
3. Sufficient testing: Testing has been greatly expanded. New sites were opened last week (Heather Farms in Walnut Creek, Liberty High School in Brentwood, Bishop Ranch in San Ramon). Anyone who desires to be tested, regardless of symptoms may contact their health care provider or CCHEALTH at 1-844-421-0804 to make an appointment. There is a total of nine sites for testing. Additional phone lines have been added as well as a call-back feature to address the long wait times on hold. With the six County and three State run testing sites, the County expects to reach 1500 tests per day, hopefully to achieve the goal of 2200 tests per day with assistance from the area hospitals. There is no charge for testing. People should go through their healthcare provider if they have one. If not, there will be no charge for testing at any site in the County.

A toolkit for skilled nursing facilities is in final review with the health officers. We are recommending that staff as well as residents be tested twice a month. We are also assisting them with PPE needs and distribution as well as fit testing and training. A procedure has been developed for universal testing at congregational living facilities such as assisted living and detention facilities. All new inmates are quarantined for the first 14 days and any with symptoms are being tested upon booking. All will be tested, twice a month, those residing the facility and those working there.

4. Contact tracing and disease investigation: The department has heard that a letter is being distributed in the area that testing is mandatory to receive social services. That is not true. The letter is not from any official source in the County.

There are 8 antibody tests that have FDA emergency approval. Health Services is not recommending antibody testing outside research purposes at this time. The County is currently working on validation of the accuracy of one of the tests.

There were 14 people conducting disease investigation including tracing. That number has been increased to 75 with plans to reach 200. County staff is being reassigned to meet this need as well as recruiting volunteers. Anyone interested can email Covid-19 Volunteers at our CCHEALTH.org website. The state plans to create a tracing group, of which the County intends to request assistance from when it is available. Additional employees will also be hired, including 47 positions that are on today's agenda for approval. The state opened a tracing academy last week run by UCSF and we sent 12 people attend, with 25 more staff slated for the next class. The first group was 9 public health staff and three librarians.

Health Services requested to be a pilot sit for the new free software being rolled out by the state to improve the contact tracing and ability for tracing and investigation. News on acceptance is expected this afternoon.

5. **Sufficient Personal Protective Equipment on hand:** The County is still receiving requests for PPE from hospitals, congregate living facilities, testing sites and medical and dental offices. The most requested item is the N95 mask. The County received 329 resource requests into the logistics center last week of which we were able to fill 231. Thank you to the volunteers that coordinated to retrofit 90,510 duck bill masks, which have been distributed.

Dr. Farnitano reports that Health Services has been working closely with the Superintendent of Schools to assist them new guidelines on how to stay within protective health orders and have graduation recognitions, such as drive-by ceremonies. Soon to be released are guidelines on vehicle-based gatherings .

Some rural counties with very few cases of Covid-19 and a widely spread population may be eligible under state guidance to open up at a faster pace than the rest of the state. As a heavily populated area, the six regional Bay Area counties will be moving in tandem to open up step-by-step. On May 4, the health order was loosened to allow outdoor activities to resume (all construction, outdoor work and some youth recreation). The indicators to open up more fully will be met soon. Health Services would like two weeks to observe the impact of the loosened measures already taken. We are looking at data day-by-day to allow drive-up retail (curbside pickup).

County Administrator

A number of forecasts predict a downturn in the economy. Governor Newsom's projected last week a state shortfall of about \$54 billion. The state rainy day reserve fund is about \$16 billion. He talked about a 30% cut in terms of the state's current general fund budget, expecting a long-term economic downturn, and that state revenues, both relating to personal income sales and corporate taxes were likely to plunge by at least 20%. The Governor's May Revise of the budget will be out this coming Thursday.

Approximately 40% of the County general fund budget comes from either the state or federal government. Many counties are projecting that budgets will need to be reduced by 10 to 20%. Dramatic increases need to be made to support hospitals and clinics, necessitating reductions in other areas of the budget.

Some additional funding from the federal government has been provided under the CARES Act to provide Covid-19 response. From March through May the County will have spent about \$10.5 million, expecting June and July to be an additional \$7 million. The CARES Act also added 80 hours of sick leave for In-Home Support Services employees, an unanticipated cost of approximately \$37.2 million. The CARES act reimburses some costs but not others.

The County faces a large shortfall in revenues from sales taxes, possibly significant delays

in receipts of property taxes, and expenses for personnel that will not be fully covered under CARES Act reimbursement guidelines. The County is actively seeking all available grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and others. Mr. Twa noted that even when a grant is obtained the disbursement of funds tends to be very slow.

The County has been able to return to work many employees who were at home caring for children during the shutdown and has provided a substantial amount of equipment to allow nearly 1000 to work from home. At this point, most employees are back in work in some fashion. Plans are underway to to realign office spaces to allow for social distancing. The County has long worked toward a goal of fewer buildings, better buildings, better spaces for employee to work in and more opportunities to work remotely.