May 11, 2020

Dear Elected Officials and Clerk of the Board:

This email is being submitted as a written comment to Item No. 13 on the May 12, 2020 Board of Supervisors meeting. I request attachment and publication of this email as part of that item, consistent with County practice.

I am bringing to your attention disturbing recent changes in the County’s response to the pandemic and am making a plea for sanity. I am running out of hope that the Public Health people such as Sara Cody, and those running the Emergency Operations Center (Jeff Smith, James Williams, and Greta Hansen) have any sense of perspective beyond the immediate, medical and health issues they are dealing with. They seem incapable of balancing the benefits of the decisions they are inflicting on County residents against the harms. Most troublesome, these people have now become intolerant of dissent and seem willing to use questionable tactics to suppress it as discussed below.

The initial Shelter In Place order dated March 16, 2020 was devised for one reason only: to prevent a surge in hospital/ICU/Ventilator usage. According to the March 29, 2020 profile in the Mercury News, Dr. Cody, with advice and concurrence from those around her, devised the strictest lockdown order in the nation, setting the standard for all other such orders.

Now, the County Hospital Dashboard shows much unused capacity. At this point, we should be declaring victory and re-opening. Our hospitals are equipped to deal with any future spike in usage.

But, as you know, the County’s updated Health Order, effective May 4, adopted without any extended public discussion, set up new criteria for lifting the lockdown that will delay reopening perhaps to this fall or even next year (even as much of the rest of United States and the world is reopening).

Supervisors, we cannot wait till next year or even the next season. Our society, economy and lives are falling apart. The Bay Area is projected to lose over 800,000 jobs. The economy is in ruins. Education has come to a standstill. The basic rituals and structures of life are crumbling. This County has been on the forefront of advocating for mental health treatment: Today, the mental health of County residents doesn’t even seem to register with the leadership. According to Dr. Cody, that side of the ledger cannot be measured. Yet, signs of the impact are everywhere: Even though traffic is non-existent, DUIs are up 40 percent as District Attorney Jeff Rosen showed us all last week. Domestic Violence cases are up 7 percent. There are now more referrals of child abuse to victim services than before. This is happening even though children aren’t going to schools or daycare or doctors, so the usual sources of reporting child abuse have been completely turned off, suggesting a colossal tragedy occurring out of sight.

Everywhere you look, other leaders are making different, more reasonable choices and having balanced discussions about the costs of the lockdown: Sweden, Japan, Germany, and various states in this country emerge as unlikely shining examples. Normally, in Santa Clara, we could have relied on self-correcting mechanisms, such as an honest discussion of different points of view, as well as the Board’s accountability to the voters, to set the ship right. But, today, these checks are failing us.

The County is now being run by a handful of people at the Emergency Operations Center. These people know that local health officers such as Dr. Cody have significant authority to prevent and control communicable disease, and they are using this authority to maintain power, and suppress dissent and discussion.

Most urgently, rumors are swirling that the County leadership intends to require confidentiality or non-disclosure agreements from employees at the Emergency Operations Center. If true, this would effectively shut down any form of thoughtful discussion or dissent and violate principles of free speech. It would even cut off the ability of employees to approach you without risking their livelihoods. This is neither lawful, nor right, and is antithetical to the principles of sound government.

Supervisors, please remember that even though you do not control their daily activities, you are responsible for appointments: you appoint the county executive and the county counsel, and you ratified the appointment of Dr. Cody. You not only have the ability to hire and fire the County leadership, you also have the ability to revisit any declaration of a local emergency, and to seek advice and counsel from any source you see fit.

Without your focused attention on the troubling issues raised in this note, the residents of the Bay Area will have no ability to be heard or be responded to for a very long time. In her last interview with the Mercury News (published May 4, 2020), when asked about reopening, Dr. Cody speculated that “there’s no reason to think we wouldn’t have exponential spread” if we reopened.
No one has challenged Dr. Cody on how backward this is: No person can reasonably eliminate the possibility of infection spread before we reopen. The question to ask is whether there is hospital capacity to absorb it, and whether the harms from continuing the lockdown order exceed its benefits.

But no one is asking these questions in Santa Clara. And if the Emergency Operations Center has its way, no one ever will.

Supervisors, we ask you to step up in your important role during this crisis and to responsibly exert your control over County officials. We also respectfully request that you give clear direction that no County employees be asked to sign confidentiality or non disclosure agreements. These are unlawful and will suppress any form of robust discussion necessary for our society to survive this crisis.

I am deeply concerned for my safety and well-being and am sending this email to you as a last resort.

Lucas Ifry

--

Securely sent with Tutanota. Get your own encrypted, ad-free mailbox: https://tutanota.com
Dear Sarah Cody & Santa Clara Board of Supervisors,

According to a San Jose Mercury article today 49% of the COVID-19 deaths in California were at elderly care facilities, either with the elderly or their workers.

In order to save lives and open our economy sooner please take additional steps to prevent deaths within the COVID-19 High Risk Groups. Please mandate all workers dealing with high risk groups such as nursing homes, assisted living, prisons, hospitals, EMTs and Police check every workers temperature before starting every shift. Ensure they have paid sick leave if they are sick.

In addition, please require that all nursing home & elderly care facility workers are tested at the start of every shift. This can be done with Abbott's ID Now Test Kit in 5 minutes, is not that expensive. This will allow the economy to open sooner and generate a very high return on investment. Please provide these Abbott testing device to the elderly care facilities along with training and COVID-19 test kits. Thank you.

Hamilton Hitchings
Palo Alto Resident
Dear Sarah Cody & Santa Clara Board of Supervisors,

According to a San Jose Mercury article today 49% of the COVID-19 deaths in California where at elderly care facilities, either with the elderly or their workers.

In order to save lives and open our economy sooner please take additional steps to prevent deaths within the COVID-19 High Risk Groups. Please mandate all workers dealing with high risk groups such as nursing homes, assisted living, prisons, hospitals, EMTs and Police check every workers temperature before starting every shift. Ensure they have paid sick leave if they are sick.

In addition, please require that all nursing home & elderly care facility workers are tested at the start of every shift. This can be done with Abbott's ID Now Test Kit in 5 minutes, is not that expensive. This will allow the economy to open sooner and generate a very high return on investment. Please provide these Abbott testing device to the elderly care facilities along with training and COVID-19 test kits. Thank you.

Hamilton Hitchings
Palo Alto Resident
May 11, 2020

Dear Elected Officials and Clerk of the Board:

This email is being submitted as a written comment to Item No. 13 on the May 12, 2020 Board of Supervisors meeting. I request attachment and publication of this email as part of that item, consistent with County practice.

I am bringing to your attention disturbing recent changes in the County’s response to the pandemic and am making a plea for sanity. I am running out of hope that the Public Health people such as Sara Cody, and those running the Emergency Operations Center (Jeff Smith, James Williams, and Greta Hansen) have any sense of perspective beyond the immediate, medical and health issues they are dealing with. They seem incapable of balancing the benefits of the decisions they are inflicting on County residents against the harms. Most troublesome, these people have now become intolerant of dissent and seem willing to use questionable tactics to suppress it as discussed below.

The initial Shelter In Place order dated March 16, 2020 was devised for one reason only: to prevent a surge in hospital/ICU/Ventilator usage. According to the March 29, 2020 profile in the Mercury News, Dr. Cody, with advice and concurrence from those around her, devised the strictest lockdown order in the nation, setting the standard for all other such orders.

Now, the County Hospital Dashboard shows much unused capacity. At this point, we should be declaring victory and re-opening. Our hospitals are equipped to deal with any future spike in usage.

But, as you know, the County’s updated Health Order, effective May 4, adopted without any extended public discussion, set up new criteria for lifting the lockdown that will delay reopening perhaps to this fall or even next year (even as much of the rest of United States and the world is reopening).

Supervisors, we cannot wait till next year or even the next season. Our society, economy and lives are falling apart. The Bay Area is projected to lose over 800,000 jobs. The economy is in ruins. Education has come to a standstill. The basic rituals and structures of life are crumbling. This County has been on the forefront of advocating for mental health treatment: Today, the mental health of County residents doesn’t even seem to register with the leadership. According to Dr. Cody, that side of the ledger cannot be measured. Yet, signs of the impact are everywhere: Even though traffic is non-existent, DUIs are up 40 percent as District Attorney Jeff Rosen showed us all last week. Domestic Violence cases are up 7 percent. There are now more referrals of child abuse to victim services than before. This is happening even though children aren’t going to schools or daycare or doctors, so the usual sources of reporting child abuse have been completely turned off, suggesting a colossal tragedy occurring out of sight.

Everywhere you look, other leaders are making different, more reasonable choices and having balanced discussions about the costs of the lockdown: Sweden, Japan, Germany, and various states in this country emerge as unlikely shining examples. Normally, in Santa Clara, we could have relied on self-correcting mechanisms, such as an honest discussion of different points of view, as well as the Board’s accountability to the voters, to set the ship right. But, today, these checks are failing us.

The County is now being run by a handful of people at the Emergency Operations Center. These people know that local health officers such as Dr. Cody have significant authority to prevent and control communicable disease, and they are using this authority to maintain power, and suppress dissent and discussion.

Most urgently, rumors are swirling that the County leadership intends to require confidentiality or non-disclosure agreements from employees at the Emergency Operations Center. If true, this would effectively shut down any form of thoughtful discussion or dissent and violate principles of free speech. It would even cut off the ability of employees to approach you without risking their livelihoods. This is neither lawful, nor right, and is antithetical to the principles of sound government.

Supervisors, please remember that even though you do not control their daily activities, you are responsible for appointments: you appoint the county executive and the county counsel, and you ratified the appointment of Dr. Cody. You not only have the ability to hire and fire the County leadership, you also have the ability to revisit any declaration of a local emergency, and to seek advice and counsel from any source you see fit.

Without your focused attention on the troubling issues raised in this note, the residents of the Bay Area will have no ability to be heard or be responded to for a very long time. In her last interview with the Mercury News (published May 4, 2020), when asked about re-opening, Dr. Cody speculated that “there’s no reason to think we wouldn’t have exponential spread” if we reopened.
No one has challenged Dr. Cody on how backward this is: No person can reasonably eliminate the possibility of infection spread before we reopen. The question to ask is whether there is hospital capacity to absorb it, and whether the harms from continuing the lockdown order exceed its benefits.

But no one is asking these questions in Santa Clara. And if the Emergency Operations Center has its way, no one ever will.

Supervisors, we ask you to step up in your important role during this crisis and to responsibly exert your control over County officials. We also respectfully request that you give clear direction that no County employees be asked to sign confidentiality or non disclosure agreements. These are unlawful and will suppress any form of robust discussion necessary for our society to survive this crisis.

I am deeply concerned for my safety and well-being and am sending this email to you as a last resort.

Lucas Ifry

--

Securely sent with Tutanota. Get your own encrypted, ad-free mailbox: 
https://tutanota.com
Date: May 9th 2020

Dear Oceanside,

I write to you during a very challenging time. I’ve exhausted every avenue available to advocate and pressure meaningful changes both to the County of San Diego and State of California to get Oceanside back to work and your Constitutional freedoms completely reinstated. The more I dig, the more I realize both the State and County have been without a plan from the beginning. At the expense of millions of jobs and hundreds of thousands of businesses that will never recover, Governor Newsom has chosen a political pathway lacking of science, common sense and constitutional precedent. I swore an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of California against all enemies, foreign and domestic and I take that oath very seriously. I’m convinced that the Constitutional rights of Oceanside residents and businesses have been trampled upon and I choose to take a stand.

If your business has been labeled “non-essential” and you share in my convictions, then I encourage you to open immediately and to please follow all social distancing, face mask and sterilization protocols that essential businesses and employees are currently following. If you’re an employee of an opening business that has been labeled “non-essential” and you feel comfortable going back to work to provide for your family again, then I encourage you to do so. I further call on like-minded Oceanside residents to safely patronize and support these businesses and to also practice county health recommendations of social distancing and face masks when practical. I also call for non-profits to serve again, and house of worship to worship again, implementing safety protocols that we all have become familiar with.

Many County Sheriffs and Police Chiefs across our state have publicly refused to make arrests and enforce health orders knowing that they swore an oath to serve and protect the people and to support and defend the Constitution. I have faith and deep respect for Oceanside Police Chief McCoy who’s shared his philosophy of educating the citizens and businesses on the importance of complying with health orders and Constitutionally enacted laws. I’m here to support and help you reopen your business and safely get back to work. Your life, your job and your business are all essential to the future of Oceanside.

Sincerely,

Christopher Rodriguez
Oceanside City Council District 2
Dear Supervisors:

I’m writing in extreme frustration at the lack of common sense being demonstrated in opening businesses. How can it be ok to stand in lines to get in, lines to get out of the “chosen” stores: Walmart, Target, Costco & grocery stores yet if all other businesses has some safety precautions still remain closed & our poor owners who pay taxes too are expected to become destitute, broke & homeless as this drags on??? It’s over the top now. I’ve been a nurse practitioner in Lodi for 25 yrs & now my fellow colleagues have been laid off because the pendulum has swung so far the other direction due to this continued & unnecessary lockdown prison we’ve been enduring that now there’s no work!!!
Even the hair dressers can wear those shields & a mask like the nurses do & could open. It’s unreal the “powers that be” can sleep at night knowing people are destitute!!
PLEASE OPEN UP!! The curve is flattened & hospitals are stocked- it’s time now!
ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

Lisa O’Neal RN, MSN, FNP
This letter is in support of Tom Patti, efforts to reopen the Cities and San Joaquin County.

At this time, we have ten's of thousands of residents who are wondering how they are going to pay their bills and keep roofs over their heads. Because our tyrannical Governor wants things done his way and does not care about the struggles the people are facing.

Right now less than 1% of the people are affected with the Corona Virus yet 99% of the people are dealing with the financial struggles that have been imposed on us.

It is time to allow the business's in the cities and counties to open up, put people back to work and give them hope in coming out of this financial crisis that was not of their own making.

Thank you for your time.