

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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April 28, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, 1st Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Moving to First Phase of Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Governor Newsom:

The Shasta County Board of Supervisors thanks you and your administration for your statewide leadership during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Your quick and forceful actions have decreased spread within the state, reduced surge impact of hospitals, and greatly limited the death rate.

In the 13-county Northstate, which is also known as Office of Emergency Services Region 3, COVID incidence and hospital impacts have been low. As of April 27, there had been only 125 reported cases in the 13 counties, for a case-rate of 15.4 per 100,000 residents, compared to a rate of 109.4 per 100,000 residents in the State of California. We believe that our strong containment efforts, combined with the early establishment of the stay-at-home order issued by your office, were responsible for this outstanding outcome. In Shasta County, our hospitalizations peaked on April 5, more than three weeks ago.

While we realize that these conditions can change over time, we believe that the worst of the first wave of COVID disease and hospital surge has passed in our region. Likewise, we believe that we can meet the six criteria you have outlined for relaxing of the stay-at-home order:

1. With the addition of new testing resources from the state, testing, contact tracing, and other containment capacity will be robust in our county by the first week of May;
2. Vulnerable populations should continue to shelter in place at home;
3. We have a 125-bed alternative care site stood up, in addition to extensive surge capacity within our local hospitals;
4. We request that any proven therapeutic drugs be made available to Shasta County providers through the manufacturers' expanded access program;
5. Our local health officer has established a committee of local stakeholders to work on social distancing measures within businesses, schools, and other local institutions; and
6. We plan to apply appropriate containment and mitigation measures if a spike in cases occurs.

The first phase of relaxation of the strict measures that have been in effect should include:

- Maintaining the stay-at-home order for persons aged 65 and older, and for those with underlying medical conditions;
- Maintaining the ban on non-essential travel outside of one's home county;
- Maintaining the ban on mass gatherings;
- Maintaining the restriction of visitors to congregate living facilities for seniors;
- Maintaining social distancing measures in all open businesses;
- Allowing many non-essential businesses to reopen with social distancing and sanitation measures;
- Allowing gatherings of up to ten people; and
- Allowing outdoor recreation with social distancing.

We request that you lift the stay-at-home order for communities that meet the following criteria:

1. Incidence of disease in decline from peak for at least 28 days;
2. Hospitalization in decline from peak for at least 28 days;
3. Demonstration of adequate capacity for testing and contact tracing;
4. Demonstration of ability to cope with hospital surge;
5. Establishment of social distancing and sanitation guidelines for businesses; and
6. Establishment of triggers for increasing or decreasing social distancing measures.

This can be accomplished by modifying your existing stay-at-home order based on regional conditions, or by rescinding the order completely for counties that meet the criteria and allowing local health officers to determine appropriate measures for each county.

Shasta County would like to move into the first phase of relaxing of the stay-at-home on May 3, 28 days since our hospitalization peak. While the stay-at-home order was necessary for a time, businesses are now at risk of permanent closure and many thousands of workers are unemployed. While COVID is a deadly health threat, so too is economic poverty. Our region was already more disadvantaged, as measured by median family income, before the pandemic, and the business closures will only exacerbate this reality and widen the health disparities between our Northstate region and California as a whole.

We realize you have much to consider and have the well being of all Californians in mind. However, we also believe that we are a large and populous state, and that disease conditions vary widely throughout the state's geography. One approach for all does not seem workable moving forward, and a more regional approach may allow the flexibility needed to balance disease control with the economic needs of residents. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Mary Rickert
Chair, Shasta County Board of Supervisors