

June 25, 2020

Honorable Supervisor John Haschak, Chair
Board of Supervisors
County of Mendocino
501 Low Gap Road, Room 1010
Ukiah, CA 95482

Re: Request to Meet Regarding Access for Monolingual Spanish-Speakers During COVID-19 and Other
Emergencies

Dear Honorable Chair Haschak and Members of the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors:

Several Latino groups throughout Mendocino County, including coalitions, committees, and media outlets write today to express both our acknowledgment of and our hope for continued and expanded efforts towards inclusiveness of the county's special populations, particularly the community's monolingual Spanish speaking members, when carrying out the County's critical role in times of disaster.

As you are well aware, our county has faced its share of disasters over the last few years with the most current COVID-19 pandemic still looming. These disasters bring to the fold the valuable lesson that accurate, accessible and timely information to the public is critical to both the health and well-being of the individual residents themselves and to the community as a whole. According to the California Department of Public Health, Latinos are the ethnic group most impacted by COVID-19. We hope that by this letter we can initiate additional conversation, ideas and action that could improve the County's critical disaster planning as well as information sharing with the community's limited-English proficient residents, and the Latino community in general.

As the understanding of combating COVID-19 is fluid and ever-evolving so have been the responses from all levels of government. The disease has certainly created unprecedented challenges but has also brought to the fore historical and structural inequities. Specifically, as the statistics roll out, we have learned that COVID-19 is disproportionately impacting persons of Latino descent, African Americans and other minority populations, including Native Americans. Statewide, as of May 31st, Latinos make up 54.3% of cases and 39% of deaths. This disproportionate impact is a result of multiple reasons, including pre-existing health disparities. Additionally, social and economic factors also play a role. For example, for many minority communities staying at home practicing social distancing guidelines and not working is not an option. In an April 29th report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the agency's researchers wrote: "It is critical that public health officials ensure that prevention activities prioritize communities and racial groups most affected by COVID-19."

While the County has made some effort to provide a portion of COVID-19 response information in Spanish, we believe that the County can do better by improving its messaging and testing. We can help access populations that are hard to reach.

We propose the following:

1. Provide all information in both English and Spanish;
2. Make translation mandatory in the County's Emergency Response Plan;
3. Add California Certified interpreters to the annual County Budget because translation is highly technical and requires a professional translator;
4. Allocate enough time during press conferences so that the same information is provided in both English and in Spanish;
5. Create an Equity and Diversity Task Force comprised of county staff and community members to create policies and procedures to ensure inclusion within County structures, among County staff and in the delivery of services; and
6. Host bilingual public forums for community feedback on county services.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to reach out to me, Roseanne Ibarra at (707) 391-2321, IbarraR02@ah.org to schedule a time for us to meet. We offer our support and we thank you for the work you are doing to keep our community safe and healthy.

Respectfully,

While the County has made some effort to provide a portion of COVID-19 response information in Spanish, we believe that the County can do better by improving its messaging and testing. We can help access populations that are hard to reach.

We propose the following:

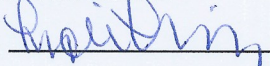
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Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to reach out to me, Roseanne Ibarra at (707) 467-5260, IbarraR02@ah.org to schedule a time for us to meet. We offer our support and we thank you for the work you are doing to keep our community safe and healthy.

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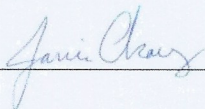
Lydia Lopez, Chair

Ukiah Vecinos en Acción

Signature :  Date: 6/26/20

Javier Chavez, Member

South Coast Latino Coalition

Signature :  Date: June 24, 2020

_____, Chair

Sueño Latino, Treasurer

Signature Donna Pierson-Pugh Date: 6/26/20

_____, Radio Producer

MendoLatino

Signature : _____ Date: _____

Roseanne Ibarra, Chair

Mendocino Latinx Alliance

Signature : _____ Date: _____

_____, Chair

La Coalición Latina de la Costa de Mendocino

Signature : _____ Date: _____

_____, Chair

Nuestra Alianza FRC

Signature : _____ Date: _____

_____, Co-Owner

Periodico Al Punto

Signature : _____ Date: _____

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Lydia Lopez, Chair

Ukiah Vecinos en Acción

Signature : _____ Date: _____

Javier Chavez, Member

South Coast Latino Coalition

Signature : _____ Date: _____

_____, Chair

Sueño Latino

Signature : _____ Date: _____

Loreto Rojas, Radio Producer

MendoLatino

Signature : Loreto Rojas Date: 6/30/20

Roseanne Ibarra, Chair

Mendocino Latinx Alliance

Signature : [Signature] Date: 7/9/20

Araceli Rivas, Member

La Coalición Latina de la Costa de Mendocino

Signature : [Signature] Date: 8/29/20

Jaime del Aguila, Chair

Nuestra Alianza FRC

Signature : Jaime del Aguila Date: 6/23/20

Sara Marquez, Co-Owner

Periodico Al Punto

Signature : Sara Marquez Date: 7/14/20