County of Santa Cruz

Public Health Division

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Press Release

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COUNTY IDENTIFIES ALTERNATE CARE SITES

To expand local health care capacity in coordination with the county's network of local health care providers, as well as critical services capacity, the County of Santa Cruz is preparing additional facilities to treat those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and deliver meals to those in need.

The use of alternate care sites is being established to support the Santa Cruz County Public Health Division as part of its surge care planning, and is designed to free up local hospital capacity by treating patients who need hospitalization but do not have complex medical needs. By partnering with 1440 Multiversity and Simpkins Family Swim Center, approximately 100 patients will have a safe place to receive care and recuperate while under the care of medical professionals and in keeping with best medical practices.

"Alternate care sites are a key aspect of our surge planning as we build out our capacity in order to assure that we can continue safely meeting the medical needs of our residents," Santa Cruz County Health Officer Dr. Gail Newel said. "While hospitals in the county are able to meet the current need, things can change quickly so we're getting ready now."

The partnership with 1440 Multiversity is multifaceted, and includes deployment of 1440 Multiversity staff and resources to prepare hundreds of fresh, nutritious meals to be delivered from 1440 Multiversity's 75-acre private campus three times daily to vulnerable residents in shelters throughout Santa Cruz County.

"1440 Multiversity is proud to answer the call and to be of service to our community," said Frank Ashmore, Managing Director of 1440 Multiversity. "We are grateful to be able to join so many people and organizations around the country who have stepped up to help."

Alternative care sites are not open to the public and are not walk-up medical facilities. They are designated for individuals with a range of non-complex medical needs and will not be used to treat critically ill COVID-19 patients.

Public Health
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The Santa Cruz County Public Health Division is working with local medical specialists, the Santa Cruz County Emergency Operations Center, and the Santa Cruz County Medical Reserve Corps, which is made up of trained volunteers who assist public health efforts during times of special need or disaster and would staff the alternate care sites should the need arise.

"Our hope is that the use of these sites will be minimized due to the protective actions our community is taking," Health Services Agency Director Mimi Hall said. "I want to thank the owners and staff of 1440 Multiversity for their incredible generosity and dedication to helping secure not only quality medical care, but making sure our unhoused population has access to quality, nutritious food as well."

In addition, upon request by Dignity Health Dominican Hospital, the County has deployed a portion of its mobile hospital to help triage patients and minimize hospital impacts during the COVID-19 outbreak. This represents the first deployment of any portion of the temporary hospital, which was acquired in 2017 through the California Emergency Medical Service Authority.

Santa Cruz County currently has 69 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including one death. For local information on COVID-19, go to www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus, call 211 or text "COVID19" to 211211. Residents may also call (831) 454-4242 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., seven days a week.

For more on 1440 Multiversity and its 501(c)(3) nonprofit learning mission, go to 1440.org. For more on Simpkins Family Swim Center and County Parks, go to www.scparks.com.