

City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE: AUGUST 4, 2020**

FROM: COUNCILMEMBER RONALDO FIERRO **WARDS: ALL**
COUNCILWOMAN GABY PLASCENCIA

SUBJECT: ADOPT A RESOLUTION URGING HCA HEALTHCARE, AREA HOSPITALS AND OTHER HEALTHCARE AND MEDICAL FACILITIES TO IMPLEMENT HEIGHTENED PROTECTIVE MEASURES FOR FRONTLINE HEALTHCARE WORKERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC DUE TO COVID-19.

ISSUE:

Adopt a resolution reaffirming the City's commitment to frontline workers and urging local healthcare and medical facilities, and specifically HCA Healthcare owned Riverside Community Hospital, to implement heightened protective measures with the goal of ensuring the safety of frontline healthcare workers and patients, furthering the curbing of COVID-19.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Adopt the attached resolution reaffirming the commitment to frontline healthcare workers, support for a comprehensive set of heightened statewide guidelines, directives and enforcement and imposing the following guidelines calling for healthcare facilities to:
 - a. Provide employees with proper and adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) if requested, and always for any employee coming in contact with a probable or confirmed COVID patient, or a hospital worker who has interacted with a hospital worker who has interacted with a COVID patient; and
 - b. Formulate a strict visitor policy that requires the wearing of face coverings and includes temperature checks and screening for COVID-19 symptoms, while testing patients in advance of scheduled procedures when applicable and before anyone enters the hospital; and
 - c. Require quarantined healthcare workers to test negative for COVID-19 before coming back to work and be given advance notice before they are required to do so.
 - d. Ensure sufficient staffing at hospitals so COVID-19 and all patients receive quality care, and, due to furloughs, reduced hours, and staffing cuts, invest in programs so that workers can sign up for additional shifts to keep patients safe; and

2. Adopt the attached resolution to go into effect immediately upon adoption and to terminate and be of no further force and effect upon the repeal of the Local Emergency and be reviewed by the City Council in 60 days; and
3. Direct staff to distribute these guidelines to all area healthcare facilities, including hospitals, clinics and assisted living facilities in a timely manner.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Riverside, pursuant to the police powers delegated to it by the Constitution of the State of California, has the authority to enact laws which promote the public health, safety and general welfare of its residents. In accordance with Municipal Code Chapter 9.20.260, The City Council is empowered to enact ordinances, resolutions or rules to prevent against, mitigate, and prepare for aid in the response or recovery to all such foreseeable or unforeseeable emergencies and disasters.

During a local emergency the City Council may promulgate orders and regulations necessary to provide for the protection of life and property, such orders and regulations and amendments and rescissions thereof shall be in writing and shall be given widespread publicity and notice.

On March 4th, 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom declared a State of Emergency in California due to the threat of Coronavirus (COVID-19). On March 8th, 2020, Riverside County Public Health Officer declared a local health emergency based the imminent threat to public health from COVID-19 in Riverside County.

On March 17th, 2020, the Riverside City Council ratified a local emergency declaration in order to protect the public from COVID-19. Further actions ordered all bars, wineries and breweries to close and for restaurants to cut capacity to 50%. A previous order by the Riverside County Public Health Officer ordered the cancellation of all gatherings with an expected presence of 10 people or more, effectively closing most small businesses.

On March 19th, California Governor Gavin Newsom put in place a statewide a “Stay at Home” order, closing down all but essential businesses and telling over 40 million Californians to stay at home whenever possible.

On April 5th, 2020, the County Public Health Officer ordered that all residents leaving their homes to wear face coverings when outside and prohibited all public gatherings. On May 11th, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors voted to rescind all local public health orders, including the face mask requirement, claiming that the rescissions would streamline the reopening process.

On April 21st, the Riverside City Council passed Resolution No. 23569 aimed at enhancing efforts to safeguard public health and provide safety and protections for frontline workers and customers. The resolution specifically enacted the following:

- 50% Limited Capacity
- Social Distancing Requirements
- Providing PPE for Employees
- No Mask, No Service Policy Encouraged

The resolution thus far has provided needed support and consistency for frontline workers that have an increased chance of contracting the virus and increasing community spread. This has become particularly relevant with the rescission of health orders by the County of Riverside.

According to the California Department of Public Health (as of June 21st, 2020): Riverside County is experiencing elevated disease transmission.

Drivers of this include:

- outbreaks at state prisons and skilled nursing facilities (SNFs)
- potential transmission at public protests with large numbers of people in close proximity without face coverings
- in-county patient transfers from Imperial County,
- patients seeking care from Northern Baja California and traveling along SR-86 corridor into Coachella Valley and
- general increases in local gatherings.

Key action steps to address concerns include:

- close monitoring of data;
- increase testing volume at county and state sites;
- continue SNF outreach and support and implement Quick Response Task Force assistance for high risk facilities;
- expand contact tracing workforce;
- increase public messaging on the importance of personal protection measures; and
- coordination and communication between the local health department, CDPH, and California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to mitigate outbreaks at state prisons.

As of the writing of this report, there are 4,353 cases in the City of Riverside, with 146 total deaths. Throughout the County, there have been 31,982 total cases and 7,870 deaths. The current positivity rate is 12.4%, and the current 3-day average for ICU capacity is 90.4%, when including NICU's. Without NICU's, the capacity is much more strained.

DISCUSSION:

Frontline healthcare workers such as doctors, nurses, paramedics, laboratory workers, environmental service workers, and other healthcare staff have been and remain the first line of defense in our collective fight against the spread of COVID-19. Even in proper conditions, these professionals put themselves at risk of contracting COVID-19 in their mission to serve their patients and keep our community healthy. In absence of proper, strict and clear conditions, both healthcare workers and the patients that they serve are at a greater risk to contract and spread the deadly virus, many times in avoidable circumstances.

As cases continue to soar and surge throughout the Nation and the State of California, healthcare workers are increasingly contracting COVID-19, and, sadly in many cases, dying from the virus. Nationwide, 821 healthcare worker fatalities have been recorded. Across California, 107 healthcare workers have died from COVID-19 with nearly 20,000 testing positive.

To compound the issue, hospitals in Riverside County and the City of Riverside have received a surge in cases, with the average ICU capacity over 100% for the past 7 days, along with renewed concerns about finite supply of Personal Protective Equipment and adequate staffing.

Locally, workers at healthcare and medical facilities within the City of Riverside and the County of Riverside, including hospitals, clinics and assisted living facilities, have faced challenging conditions and some facilities have seen the highest COVID-19 death per capita in Southern California.

In early April, the Extended Care Hospital of Riverside and the Magnolia Rehabilitation and Nursing Center made headlines when over 60 patients and multiple employees tested positive for COVID-19 within the same week. According to the Press Enterprise report, nursing homes in Riverside County have some of the highest rates of COVID-19 deaths per capita in all of Southern California.

HCA Healthcare, the largest for-profit hospital chain in the country, has received national criticism from frontline healthcare workers and government officials. In recent months, healthcare workers across the California and the United States have protested unsafe conditions and protocols at many HCA Healthcare hospitals, beginning here in Riverside at Riverside Community Hospital.

HCA Healthcare and other healthcare facilities have blamed supply chain issues, a nationwide shortage of PPE, and finite monetary resources for any lack in PPE for their workers. However, HCA's received nearly 1.4 billion in CARES Act funding and had a blistering 38% increase in profits in their second quarter during some of the roughest times of the pandemic. After taking out taxes, HCA recorded \$590 million in taxpayer bailouts, representing 55% of its profit.

Workers at Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital, Stanford Healthcare in San Jose, JFK and Palms West medical centers in Florida, and here locally at Riverside Community Hospital, have protested against a consistent failure to provide adequate PPE and to adhere to strict and clear guidelines when it comes to patient testing and sufficient staffing.

This resolution will provide needed guidance and support for our frontline healthcare workers who continue, day in and day out, to keep our communities healthy and safe. By passing this resolution, the City Council commits to the following:

1. That the Riverside City Council reaffirms its commitment to frontline healthcare workers in the fight against the spread of COVID-19 and in maintaining the health and safety of healthcare professionals who risk their lives for the well-being of others.
2. That the Riverside City Council believes that it is absolutely necessary to ensure that healthcare professionals in both the hospital and in-home support service settings should be provided with sufficient Personal Protective Equipment.
3. That the Riverside City Council understands there is a nationwide shortage of Personal Protective Equipment, including N95 masks, and further commits to assisting healthcare facilities procure PPE.
4. That the Riverside City Council supports a comprehensive set of guidelines, directives and enforcement be implemented statewide in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that includes both avoiding transmission and caring for patients.

5. That the Riverside City Council reaffirms its commitment and responsibility to protect and preserve the lives and health of all Riversiders during a time of an unprecedented emergency.

This resolution also calls on healthcare and medical facilities to commit to the following:

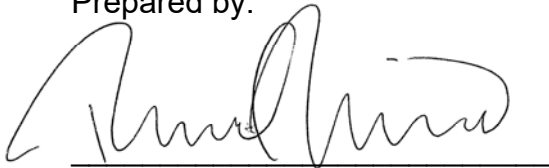
- Providing proper and adequate Personal Protective Equipment: Personal protective equipment” or “PPE” means protective equipment for eyes, face, head, and extremities, protective clothing, respiratory devices, and protective shields and barriers provided and used wherever it is necessary by reason of hazards of processes or environment, biological hazards, chemical hazards, radiological hazards, or mechanical irritants encountered in a manner capable of causing injury or impairment in the function of any part of the body through absorption, inhalation or physical contact, including, but not limited to, N95 and other filtering facepiece respirators, elastomeric air-purifying respirators with appropriate particulate filters or cartridges, powered air purifying respirators, disinfecting and sterilizing devices and supplies, medical gowns and apparel, face masks, surgical masks, face shields, gloves, and the equipment identified by or otherwise necessary to comply with Sections 3380 and 5199 of Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations and Subpart I (commencing with Section 1910.132) of Part 1910 of Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on May 19, 2020.
- Implementing Visitation and Patient Policy: Formulating a strict visitor policy that requires the wearing of face coverings and includes temperature checks and screening for COVID-19 symptoms and commitment to test patients in advance of scheduled procedures when applicable and before entering the hospital.
- Frontline Worker Proactive Measures: Require quarantined healthcare workers to test negative for COVID before they are required to come back to work and be given advance notice before they are required to do so, while also ensuring sufficient staffing at hospitals so COVID-19 and all patients receive quality care, and, due to furloughs, reduced hours, and staffing cuts, invest in programs so that workers can sign up for additional shifts to keep patients safe,

This Resolution shall go into effect immediately upon adoption and shall terminate and be of no further force and effect upon the repeal of the Local Emergency. This Resolution, unless the Local Emergency has been repealed, shall be reviewed by the City Council in 60 days.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no anticipated fiscal impact of this action.

Prepared by:



RONALDO FIERRO
Councilmember, Ward 3



GABY PLASCENCIA
Councilwoman, Ward 5

Attachments:

1. Resolution
2. Guidelines