



**DESERT HEALTHCARE DISTRICT
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD**

Board of Directors

April 3, 2020

3:00 P.M.

In accordance with the current State of Emergency and the Governor’s Executive Orders N-25-20, of March 12, 2020, and N-33-20 of March 19, 2020, teleconferencing will be used by Board members and appropriate staff members during this meeting. Members of the public will be able to participate by telephone, using the follow dial in information:

**Dial in #: (877) 304-9269
Passcode 594808#**

<i>Page(s)</i>	AGENDA <i>Any item on the agenda may result in Board Action</i>	<i>Item Type</i>
	A. CALL TO ORDER – President De Lara Roll Call ____Director Shorr____Director Zendle, MD____Director PerezGil____ Director Rogers, RN____ Director Matthews____ Vice-President/Secretary Borja____President De Lara	
	B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE	
	C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA	Action
	D. PUBLIC COMMENT At this time, comments from the audience may be made on items <u>not</u> listed on the agenda that are of public interest and within the subject-matter jurisdiction of the District. The Board has a policy of limiting speakers to no more than three minutes. The Board cannot take action on items not listed on the agenda. Public input may be offered on agenda items when they come up for discussion and/or action.	
	E. DESERT HEALTHCARE DISTRT CEO UPDATE	Information
	F. COVID-19 RAPID TESTING IN THE EASTERN COACHELLA VALLEY – Conrado E. Bárzaga, MD 1. Consideration to approve a \$350,000 allocation to strengthen the District’s healthcare safety net and expand the regional COVID-19 with rapid testing capacity	Action
	G. IMMEDIATE ISSUES AND COMMENTS	



H. ADJORNMENT

If you have any disability which would require accommodation to enable you to participate in this meeting, please email Andrea S. Hayles, Special Assistant to the CEO and Board Relations Officer, at ahayles@dhcd.org or call (760) 323-6110 at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.



**DESERT HEALTHCARE
DISTRICT & FOUNDATION**

Date: April 3, 2020
To: Board of Directors
Subject: Emergency funding for local nonprofit organizations, addressing COVID-19 outbreak and serving populations at higher risk of exposure and infection.

Staff Recommendation: Consideration to approve a \$350,000 allocation to strengthen the District’s healthcare safety net and expand the regional COVID-19 testing capacity.

Background

- The outbreak of a particularly aggressive novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) started in China in December of 2019; the disease caused by this coronavirus is known as COVID-19. It reached the U.S. in late January 2020.
- On March 7, 2020 public health officials announced the first case of COVID-19 in Coachella Valley. One week later there were 14 cases. Two related deaths in Coachella Valley announced.
- Three weeks after the first case was confirmed in our District, there are 138 cases and 9 deaths, according to RUHS Public Health data.

City/Community	Confirmed Cases
Desert Hot Springs	6
Cathedral City	12
Palm Springs	30
Rancho Mirage	13
Palm Desert	24
Indian Wells	6
La Quinta	17
Indio	23
Coachella	1
Bermuda Dunes	2
Mecca	0
Oasis	0
Thermal	0
North Shore	0
Desert Edge	1
Desert Palms	3
Sky Valley	0
Thousand Palms	0
Vista Santa Rosa	0
Total	138

Rapid Identification as first step in controlling communicable diseases:

- Testing for COVID-19 is a crucial part of slowing the spread of the disease. In fact, testing is a crucial tactic to stop the spread of any infectious disease.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) supports a policy of widespread testing. However, policies around the world vary –largely due to supplies, shortages and priorities.
- Our failure to implement COVID-19 tests early has allowed the spread of the virus undetected. In only three weeks we went from zero to 138 cases and 9 deaths. Further delays will only worsen the spread of the virus.
- On March 18 the first drive-up testing site opened in Coachella Valley, at the Southwest Church in Indian Wells.
- Due to lab testing supplies, the number of tests has been limited to approximately 150 tests/day.
- The limitations in the number of test sites, and the number of tests available underscore unmet needs.
- Traditionally underrepresented/underserved communities have had less access to COVID-19 tests. Farm workers are less likely to access tests.
- Community clinics, which aim at serving the underrepresented/underserved communities have asked for the Desert Healthcare District's support in making COVID-19 tests available.
- Their request highlights the urgent need to make cost-effective, fast and accurate tests available to our healthcare safety net; to make tests available to a larger number of people at more sites than currently available. This will help healthcare providers identify those who are infected and prevent further spread of the disease.
- Staff has researched cost-effective alternatives that can be easily deployed and implemented by community clinics without the need for sophisticated, expensive lab equipment.
- Henry Schein, Inc. one of the largest distributors of medical supplies, announced on March 26 the availability of an antibody rapid blood test, known as Standard Q COVID-19 IgM/IgG Rapid Test, intended to be administered at the point of care. The test delivers results within 15 minutes from a pinprick with no instrumentation required.
- The test has been found to be effective for the diagnosis of SARS-CoV-2. The test does not require lab equipment and can be administered effectively in community settings.
- Because the virus is new these tests are also new, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not fully assessed the tests. The FDA has been providing unprecedented flexibility to labs and manufacturers to develop and offer COVID-19 tests across the U.S. and has granted emergency use authorization for this test.
- Medical providers can use the results of the test, along with a patient's medical history, symptoms, and results of other relevant testing, to make informed decisions about patient treatment and care.
- Testing is important because asking people with mild symptoms just to stay home will lead to more infections in the household and community.

- If tested and positive, people can either be isolated in a facility or put on strict home isolation (which they are more likely to adhere to if they know they have the virus for sure).
- Additionally, making the diagnosis in community settings will limit the use of emergency room at our hospitals.
- All testing activities would be coordinated with RUHS Public Health to complement County-managed activities.
- Community-based testing by FQHCs would increase the availability and accessibility of preventive services in Coachella Valley, and reduce spread of the COVID-19 and prevent further deaths.
- It is recommended that we act fast and secure a test that can be easily deployed in the community before price continues to go up or the test kits become unavailable due to higher demand.

Recommendation:

- To allocate \$350,000 from the District's remaining grant-funding allocation (≈\$1.3 million) to purchase (≈10,600) COVID-19 test kits.
- To authorize the CEO to negotiate and execute purchase contracts.
- Test kits would be distributed equitably among the three FQHCs in Coachella Valley (DAP, CDSP, and Borrego Health).
- Test results, protocols, and further actions would be coordinated with RUHS Public Health.

Fiscal Impact:

\$350,000 allocation from the District's FY19-20 grant-making program.

County of Riverside



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SUPERVISOR V. MANUEL PEREZ FOURTH DISTRICT

April 1, 2020

Leticia DeLara
President, Desert Healthcare District

Dear President DeLara,

I am writing you today to encourage the Desert Healthcare District to support the implementation and funding of COVID19 testing in the Eastern Coachella Valley. Currently Riverside County has three community testing sites throughout the County including one in Indio. As you can imagine, the ability to get additional staff and personal protective equipment is challenging for the County to establish additional testing sites.

I have had discussions with your CEO Conrado on the possibility of employing rapid testing kits in the communities of Coachella and Mecca. As you know, East Valley residents are potentially a high-risk population due to close living conditions, asthma, diabetes and other health related issues. Additionally, I was just on an agriculture conference call with growers and packing house owners who expressed the desire for increased testing.

All the science tells us if we can determine those that are positive and isolate them, we can drastically reduce the potential for increased infection rates. Our communities have stepped up to curtail many activities, but many of our East Valley residents are still performing essential duties like farming, landscaping and childcare. While we are all focused on staying in place, maintaining space and covering our face, any ability we can have to expand our testing capabilities would be welcomed.

I appreciate everything the Desert Healthcare District is doing in this time of crisis. I sincerely hope we can make this additional testing a reality.

Sincerely,

V. MANUEL PEREZ
Supervisor, Fourth District



April 1, 2020

Leticia DeLara, President
Desert Healthcare District

Dear President DeLara,

Borrego Health requests the Desert Healthcare District to support the implementation and funding of COVID-19 testing in Eastern Coachella Valley. Currently Riverside County has three community testing sites throughout the County, including one in Indio. Borrego Health has piloted our own drive thru testing site at our Stonewall Medical Center. We are limited by the availability of test kits and proper personal protective equipment to carry out additional testing throughout the County.

Our organization remains committed to meeting the needs of the patients and communities that we serve. Our clinics remain ready to provide critical health care to those that need us most during this time of crisis.

I am grateful for what the Desert Healthcare District is doing during this emergency. I sincerely hope we can make this additional testing a reality.

Sincerely,

Dauod Ghafari, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer



1695 North Sunrise Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262

April 1, 2020

Leticia De Lara, MPA President
Conrado Bárzaga, MD CEO
Desert Healthcare District and Foundation

Dear President De Lara, Dr. Bárzaga and the Board of Directors,

I am writing today as the Director of Infectious Diseases at Desert AIDS Project (DAP) as well as a member of the Infectious Diseases Team at Desert Care Network; to encourage the Desert Healthcare District to support the funding of rapid COVID-19 test kits for the Coachella Valley. By employing rapid testing, providing results in 15 minutes, we will slow community spread of the virus. DAP is currently using the standard M PCR test technology, which requires long run times, involves complicated procedures, professional technician use only, and entails specialized machines to read results.

- The rapid test is a chromatographic immunoassay for the qualitative detection of specific antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes the COVID-19 disease) present in human serum, plasma or whole blood.
- The rapid test is for in vitro professional diagnostic use and intended as an aid to diagnosis of SARS-CoV-2 infection in convalescent phase of patient with clinical symptoms with SARS-CoV-2 infection.

Immediately recognizing the seriousness of the COVID-19 situation, and the applicability of DAP's history and specialized resources, we responded by opening a dedicated COVID-19 Triage Clinic on March 16, 2020. This Triage Clinic allows our medical experts to test and treat patients' symptoms of COVID-19 in a quarantined space while also allowing our non-symptomatic patients to continue having their health needs met in our primary health clinics without potential exposure.

In addition to testing, outpatient care provided at DAP's COVID-19 Triage Clinic includes: a) nebulizer treatments, b) oxygen administration, and c) prescribed metered dose inhalers.

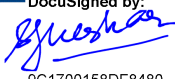
- These respiratory treatments use aerosolized or inhaled medications to open and maintain airway function while also reducing secretions to preserve or improve pulmonary or lung capacity.
- Oxygen therapy provides highly concentrated supplemental oxygen to ensure cells are getting the necessary amount of oxygen required to function.



With over 35 years of experience in the treatment and prevention of one of the most widespread pandemics in human history (HIV), DAP is uniquely positioned to save lives and reduce demand on our region's emergency departments. DAP currently employs a large cadre of healthcare professionals with extensive experience and expertise in dealing with infectious diseases, including three physicians who are board-certified infectious disease specialists.

Since our founding, DAP has responded to the needs of the Coachella Valley, and we humbly look to the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation to help meet our community's unprecedented need.

Thank you for your consideration,

DocuSigned by:


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Shubha Kerkar, M.D.

Director of Infectious Diseases