News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Statement from Supervisor Cortese on Detection of Early Virus Deaths

On April 17, I requested public records from the Medical-Examiner-Coroner’s office in Santa Clara County on the number of deaths for the first three months of this calendar year. Upon receipt of those reports late Monday evening, and in the wake of recent media reports based on a separate public records request, it is clear that COVID-19-related deaths may have been underreported from January through March 2020. I renew my campaign for absolute transparency for the public as we navigate through the coronavirus pandemic. We need to redouble efforts to tie data points together and provide a completely candid analysis of the information we have.

I’m disappointed the Coroner did not notify the Board of Supervisors of this upward trend of deaths of 20 to 25%, which could translate to more than 300 additional deaths in Santa Clara County compared to the same period in 2019, much of which appear may be from the infectious disease. Not only do we need absolute transparency, but we need a reconstruction of this data and analysis so that the data on our dashboards reflect the true impact of this disease. During yesterday’s Board of Supervisors meeting I asked that frequent dashboard information from the Coroner’s office -- twice per month -- be provided to the board and to the public on ALL deaths in the county, regardless of attribution, assumed causation, or other filtering.

Our efforts here in Santa Clara County have been heroic, overall. And I am proud of our residents and government officials. But we can only increase the public trust and increase our own understanding of what we are up against by bringing forward all the data we have regarding the pandemic.