News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 27, 2020

Supervisor Dave Cortese sent the following memo today to Santa Clara County Chief Executive Jeff Smith to call for the immediate deployment of Santa Clara County’s Paramedic and Emergency Ambulance teams at all Homeless Encampments in the County:

Re: Immediate Mobilization of Ambulance Teams at Homeless Encampments in Santa Clara County

Our unhoused population of over 8,000 residents are among the most vulnerable to the widespread outbreak of COVID-19 in Santa Clara County. The unhoused are dispersed in a decentralized manner throughout the county (see attached excel of encampment locations) and are experiencing greater difficulty in taking preventative action including social distancing and isolation. The public health crisis that we are in calls for the immediate mobilization of health and medical first responders to these unhoused communities by way of a Public Health Order from the County.
Medical first responders possess the necessary training and can be provided the necessary protections to mobilize an immediate response to the unmet health and medical needs of the unhoused. Any outbreak of the COVID-19 virus would immediately raise a threat to the broader population and to health care providers and systems already in high demand.

I am requesting that the County:

a) Immediately deploy Santa Clara County’s Paramedic and Emergency Ambulance teams operated by Rural/Metro Ambulance to establish welfare check-points at all known homeless encampments in Santa Clara County for the purposes of screening, identifying and referring houseless inhabitants of the county to necessary health and welfare services, testing centers, and emergency treatment. Screening and contact tracing should be particularly focused on symptomatic individuals and those who have come in contact with them. Trained paramedic professionals should be primarily directed and marshaled to expedite this response to the approximately 8,000 unsheltered county residents.

b) Work with homeless advocates and providers to better inform the optimal locations of staging areas and the relational processes needed to accomplish this mobilization in a way that will engage the individuals in the encampments in an orderly and timely fashion. Those advocate groups include but are not limited to the following organizations:

Cham Deliverance Ministry, Winter Faith Collaborative, Sleeping Bags for the Homeless, Women’s Gathering Place, Low-Income Self-Help Center, Community Seva, Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County, Cathedral Social Ministries, Gardner Health Services, HomeFirst, the Housing Trust, Destination Home and City Team Ministries.

For more information, call the Office of Supervisor Dave Cortese at 408-299-5030.