



News Release

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Board Approves Cortese's Calls for Stronger Outreach in High Risk Communities

The Board of Supervisors gave unanimously approval on Tuesday, June 2, to Supervisor Cortese's initiative to strengthen outreach about COVID-19 in communities where residents are at a higher risk of becoming infected.

An outreach plan will return to the Board at the June 23 meeting and, at Supervisor Cortese's request, will include partnering with community groups to initiative grassroots outreach efforts including phone calls and text messaging.

The County's public health data shows disproportionate rates of the coronavirus in our Latino communities in Santa Clara County countywide and disproportionate rates in our Latino, African American and Asian American communities in East San Jose. According to the Cases Dashboard, the Zip codes with the highest rate of cases per 100,000 residents are in East San Jose: 95116, 95122, 95127, and 95148.

"Even though we may feel we are bombarded daily with updates on COVID-19, there are still communities that do not receive information in a timely way and in languages they can understand," Supervisor Cortese said. "While we are working

to bridge the digital divide, many do not have computers or tablets nor access to the Internet. We need to add to the mix grassroots communication tools that our partner organizations use in hard-to-reach communities.”

Supervisor Cortese’s proposal was partly inspired by former State Assemblywoman Nora Campos, whose recent [OpEd in the Mercury News](#) highlighted the need for grassroots COVID-19 outreach, especially in neighborhoods east of Highway 101. “Each day that passes is a lost opportunity to save lives and flatten the curve,” said Campos. “The time to act is now.”

Supervisor Cortese requested that:

- The Office of Public Affairs lead the community outreach plan that will include Shelter-in-Place guidelines, local government response and available resources, including testing.
- The community outreach plan will include coordinated efforts to identify vulnerable and at-risk populations.
- The plan will be bolstered with a strategy for public-service announcements, a mass media strategy that includes both paid, and earned mass media communications, such as newspaper, television, radio, and the internet, as well as social media.
- The plan will create an infrastructure that includes grassroots outreach efforts including phone calls and text messaging.
- The plan will use the vast network of community-based organizations in Santa Clara County that already deliver service to those that are identified as hard-to-reach or vulnerable populations.
- The Administration will provide an assessment of resources required to implement the plan, and present the Board with funding recommendations and future budget appropriations.

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