

April 22, 2020

President Cindy Chavez & Members of the Board
Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Clara
70 W. Hedding St., 10th Floor
San Jose, CA 95110

**Re: Use Race Demographic Data on COVID-19 to Tackle
Longstanding Racial Disparities & System Inequities**

Dear President Chavez and Members of the Board:

We are writing on behalf of 21 Santa Clara County community-based organizations to applaud the County's bold leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the important decision to release race demographic data for COVID-19-related deaths.

We also look forward to the further release of reliable race data for other COVID-19-related categories. Even without expanded data, however, it is clear that communities of color are among the hardest hit – even here in Santa Clara County. That is why this data is so critical. We must use this information to guide our collective response by creating policies that address these inequities in significant ways and in ways that target the root causes of systemic racism.

The newly released data shows deaths of Latinos and African Americans are happening at alarmingly disproportionate rates. Of 88 deaths, 33% were Latino even though Latinos make up only 25% of the general population, and, nearly three times as many African Americans have died compared to the general population. (Santa Clara County Public Health Department COVID-19 Dashboard, 4-21-20)

Moreover, we know that Latinos and African Americans are more likely to hold the essential services jobs that we all are heavily relying on during this crisis. They are cleaning our buildings, getting food on our tables, and taking care of our loved ones who are vulnerable and sick. And, yet, these are the very jobs we typically undervalue with inadequate compensation and lack of healthcare access.

Communities of color have been subjected to centuries of racist policies that have led to inequitable access to adequate health care, education, housing, economic opportunity, and more. We appreciate the County's recognition that social determinants of health may impact the distribution and severity of COVID-19 across the community. We further acknowledge the County's leadership over the past several years in developing its governance in ways that apply a race equity lens, including participating in GARE (Government Alliance on Race & Equity) and using race equity analyses. There is no question that COVID-19 has exposed the deep-seated inequities that have long plagued our society.

That's why we are grateful for the County's bold leadership throughout this crisis, including prioritizing the release of reliable race demographic data. And, we ask the County to take hold of this critical data to boldly address these inequities as we move into the planning for recovery and rebuilding. Specifically, we ask the County to:

- release expanded, reliable race demographic data, including testing, confirmed cases, hospitalization, as soon as it becomes available;
- add the collection, tracking, and release of related data, including housing status if available, as quickly as possible;
- use the race data to develop policies and distribute resources during the recovery and rebuilding process that tackle these racial disparities and their root causes at system levels; and
- center the voices and experiences of individuals of color most adversely impacted by this crisis in the recovery and rebuilding process.

We appreciate the actions you and other elected officials have taken thus far to provide shelter for homeless people, halt evictions, expand financial relief for unemployed individuals, extend sick leave, and enhance our health care infrastructure for those in need. Let's work together to ensure these are not just temporary changes because they reveal what is possible when we realize that our fates are all tied together. As we move ahead, we look forward to working together to ensure that our post-coronavirus Silicon Valley is a more equitable one.

Sincerely,

Alison Brunner, CEO

Law Foundation of Silicon Valley

Milan R. Balinton, Executive Director

African American Community Service Agency

Shiloh Ballard, President & Executive Director

Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition

Leslye Corsiglia, Executive Director

SV@Home

Tanis Crosby, CEO

YWCA Silicon Valley

Cayce Hill, Executive Director

Veggielution

Gregory Kepferle, CEO

Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County

Sarita Kohli, President & CEO

Asian Americans for Community Involvement

Michele Lew, CEO

The Health Trust

Jennifer Loving, CEO

Destination: Home

David K. Mineta, President & CEO

Momentum for Mental Health

Poncho Guevara, Executive Director

Sacred Heart Community Service

Megan Fluke, Executive Director

Green Foothills

Verónica Goei, Executive Director

Grail Family Services

Sparky Harlan, CEO

Bill Wilson Center

Kyra Kazantzis, CEO

Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits

Tom Myers, Executive Director

Community Services Agency

Esther Peralez-Dieckmann, Executive Director

Next Door Solutions to Domestic Violence

Suzanne St. John-Crane, CEO

American Leadership Forum Silicon Valley

E. Christopher Wilder, CEO

Valley Medical Center Foundation

Kevin Zwick, CEO

Housing Trust Silicon Valley