

County of Santa Clara

Office of the County Executive

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DATE: January 25, 2022

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors

FROM: Jeffrey V. Smith, M.D., J.D., County Executive

SUBJECT: Door-to-Door Outreach and CHBET Coordination

At the January 11, 2022 Board of Supervisors meeting (Item No. 13), Supervisor Chavez requested an off agenda report relating to the number of staff who continue to work in the community conducting door-to-door and promotora functions related to the pandemic. At the August 31, 2021 Board meeting (Item No. 27), Supervisor Ellenberg requested information relating to coordination with Board offices and San José City Council offices regarding neighborhoods that are being reached by the Community Health and Business Engagement Team (CHBET) and any trends in community needs observed through those efforts. This report responds to these requests.

In August 2020, the County launched the CHBET program, contracting with several community-based organizations to provide information, resources, and risk reduction measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and respond to the immediate needs of those communities most impacted by the pandemic. Different CHBET program partners have utilized different strategies to engage community members, including door-to-door canvassing, outreach through community locations and events, outreach to low wage workers and small businesses at worksites, and other approaches. Consistent across all CHBET programming, however, has been the reliance on culturally competent, language accessible, and connected community-based organizations as partners in engagement.

Current Status of Door-to-Door Outreach

The CHBET program is in a period of transition but continues to have 47 community health workers in the field conducting door-to-door or business outreach. At the end of January, the contract with one of our large community partners is set to expire and the number of staff dedicated to these functions will be reduced. Still, CHBET will continue to have at least 16 full time community health workers dedicated to door-to-door outreach through the end of March. In addition, with funding from the CDC and the State of California, the Public Health Department is deepening the community engagement work that began through CHBET. Seven new contracts have either been executed or are pending execution, involving 12 community-based organizations that will provide 45 community health workers/promotoras/health navigators to address not only

Board of Supervisors: Mike Wasserman, Cindy Chavez, Otto Lee, Susan Ellenberg, S. Joseph Simitian

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immediate COVID-19 response needs but also longer-term health and resiliency needs among disadvantaged communities across the county. This work will include health education and outreach at key community events, testing support, peer-to-peer outreach, and staffing of neighborhood “resiliency hubs” to provide resources to the community, among other activities.

Since late February 2021, the CHBET program has focused heavily on increasing access to COVID-19 vaccination and vaccine education through door-to-door outreach. Since that time, our partners have knocked on more than 319,000 doors and talked with over 180,000 residents. These efforts have been highly effective in providing vaccine education and easy access to vaccine appointment scheduling for our most impacted communities. However, as more and more individuals have become vaccinated, and now boosted, the need for this volume of outreach has diminished some. Similarly, business outreach efforts were extremely valuable in providing educational and resource support when there were regularly evolving health orders and during the initial vaccine rollout. More recently, the need for a dedicated business outreach team has lessened, as the local health orders are more limited and simplified, and as more and more workers have been vaccinated and boosted.

Still, door-to-door outreach continues to be an important part of the County’s COVID response efforts. CHBET teams helped distribute 9,500 in-home tests through door-to-door outreach over the holidays and they are in the process of distributing an additional 9,000 tests over the coming days.

Coordination with Board offices and San José City Council Offices

In addition to utilizing COVID case and positivity rates, vaccinations rates, and socioeconomic data, CHBET program staff have connected with each Board office to help inform decisions about where to deploy CHBET teams based on areas of need identified in each Supervisorial district. All areas suggested by Board offices have been visited. Board input has helped inform not only door-to-door outreach locations, but participation in key community events.

County staff have also been in communication with the City of San José as it relates to CHBET activities. For example, staff have provided periodic updates on this work to the Health and Racial Equity Task Force, which is co-chaired by a San José City Councilmember and has regular participation from other city councilmembers and city staff. County staff are also in communication with city staff for deployment of our CHBET teams when outreach is needed at City owned facilities (e.g. Happy Hollow) or City organized events (e.g. Christmas in the Park) as well as to coordinate rental assistance outreach.

The most common need observed by the CHBET program has been the need for rental assistance. For this reason, since late August 2021, CHBET has been conducting rent relief outreach – in addition to vaccine and Calfresh outreach – and has now referred more than 6,000 residents to rental assistance resources in partnership with the Office of Supportive Housing (OSH) and the City of San José Housing Department. While CHBET’s door-to-door work will be scaling back some in the coming weeks, this model of door-to-door outreach for rental assistance will continue both through CHBET and through new contracts OSH is putting in place with community-based non-profit partners to focus specifically on rent relief outreach.

cc: Miguel Marquez, Chief Operating Officer
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Tiffany Lennear, Clerk of the Board
Dr. Sara Cody, Health Officer
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Chief Board Aides