



May 13 Town Hall: Reopening of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties

Senator Jackson:

Thank you for joining Assemblymember Limón and Congressmember Carbajal and myself for our seventh teleconference town hall. This important call is being translated into Spanish on a separate line and our translators will simultaneously be relaying the messages of all our speakers working hard to interpret, exhaustively, accurately and completely. Those listening to the translation only here the voice of the interpreter so I'm going to ask our speakers to state their names each time they speak so that listeners can identify who is in fact speaking and you may also notice that we are going to pause a little bit more than usual to allow the interpreter to catch up and there may be times that we get a request for a clarification from the interpreter so we will be ready for that if it happens and with that we will begin. This week we've had some momentous developments as governor Newsom has announced that based on the state's progress in meeting metrics tied to indicators, the state could begin to move into stage two modifying the stay at home order this past Friday. The next step is part of the governor's four stage frameworks to allow Californians to gradually reopen while we continue to carefully follow guidelines to ensure our safety and our well-being. We have a great panel of speakers joining us today from Ventura and Santa Barbara counties who will update us on how we are meeting these important benchmarks to align with the states and reopening framework. We have with us Mona Miyasato - Santa Barbara County CEO, Van Do Reynoso - Santa Barbara County Public Health Director, Bruce Stenslie - Economic Development Collaborative President, CEO and Mike Powers – Ventura County CEO, and Dr. Vargas – Ventura County Public Health Director. They will talk to us about both what's happening in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, so we will have lots of expertise and I look forward to the questions we've got. Our counties are taking every precaution to ensure we move forward safely, every decision made is backed by science and data to support those positions we recognize the impact of economic hardship as we move forward we want to work with our businesses to make sure they are making the correct modifications to ensure a healthy and successful environment. We want to get our economy thriving once again and put paychecks and money back in people's pockets but the risk of COVID-19 infection is still real for all Californians and continues to be fatal in many instances the virus is not gone - it hasn't been contained, we don't have a cure for it yet and we don't have treatment so we must be very mindful of the risks that it continues to impose and to threaten to our public health. We have reached this stage thanks to the efforts in abiding bar by our stay well at home orders and every member of the community it gets a great appreciation and thank you but we know we must be eager to return to normal but we cannot ignore the guidelines that are still in place and we know these are not ordinary times. We have a new normal that is still evolving and we are still attempting to understand. So, as we carefully ease restrictions we have to do so cautiously and carefully we have to limit our risk of exposure by continuing to practice physical distancing and protect ourselves in the health of those around us - with that as I mentioned we have a great set of speakers and if there's any follow-up please feel free to contact my office, my website has a lot of information about the resources available so feel free to go to <https://sd19.senate.ca.gov>. Link will also keep the audio livestream on my web site along with notes from the call if you're unable to join us for the entire hour and again



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thank you for joining us this evening - we hope that the information provided will be helpful and it will be beneficial to you as we continue to respond to this public health crisis and with that Assemblymember Limón, please give us your opening remarks.

Assemblymember Limón:

Thank you so much Senator Jackson. Thank you everyone for joining us this evening. We know that there are a lot of questions out there certainly they're coming our way and we know that while we have made progress there's still some anxiety about what the future holds and the ways that we can both perhaps move into different phases of the reopening but also stay healthy. You should know that your federal, state, county, city and local representatives are all working together. We all recognize that we would love to be reopen we would love to be in a space where we aren't living the way we are living but certainly the health of our community has been at the forefront so please know that while all of us are eager to be in a different space we recognize that these are very tough decisions and these decisions are being done in the best interest of the community. My website is www.asmdc.org/limon

Congressman Carbajal:

I want to thank our County speakers that will be helping us answer the questions tonight, I understand everyone has experienced a tremendous amount of anxiety stress and frustration during sheltering at home and the closing of our businesses and loss of many. We are all looking forward to getting back to normalcy. Reopening will be gradual and grounded in sound science and medical guidance to ensure a safe reopening I know there are questions about testing tracing and treatment that will be answered tonight we also have questions about the Lompoc prison outbreak and its impact on being able to reopen I want the public to know that I am working on this issue with our local, state and federal officials.

Mona Miyasato Santa Barbara County CEO:

Thanks to everyone listening and for working so hard and keeping our collective County safe. Senator Jackson mentioned about the stages of reopening and I just want to emphasize it, all the counties are following the governor's orders and most urban and suburban counties are in stage two for low-risk businesses and how we move into the next stage which is called stage two for high-risk businesses. This is dependent upon meeting certain criteria and our public health directors talk about that in a few minutes and if we do meet that criteria it would mean destination retail and dining restaurants would be open. The next stage is Stage Three – which is personal care, hair salons and movie theaters. In Santa Barbara County we're looking at reopening plans if we can do it safely for the whole community for our physical as well as emotional and economic health and later this week we're releasing our reopening plan called RISE, which is an acronym for Reopening In a Safe Environment. The RISE guide would supplement the governor's resilience roadmap to fill in gaps. Creates a science-based approach that considers the special attributes of Santa Barbara County like the fact that we're a tourist destination. We have students come from all over the world or the state to our colleges and universities and that we have an urban suburban and rural diversity within the county and

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when local discretion is permitted by the state the guide will inform local decision-making we want to make sure we're consistent with the governor's road map but we also want to make sure we're advocating for what's needed in our County to open safely.

The guide provides parameters based on epidemiology hospital information, Public Health metrics like testing or when the public health officer may need to tighten or loosen restrictions and at what point it really recognizes that restrictions aren't on/off switches but dials I need to be turned and titrated carefully. Our guide has best practices by industry to help businesses prepare for reopening- they are compiled by a theory from a series of round tables of 27 different groups over 300 participants.

Van Do Reynoso Santa Barbara County Public Health Director:

The mission of Public Health is really to protect the health of the community by preventing disease and how we are preventing disease is really by looking at the COVID-19 infections. I'd like to share with you that Santa Barbara County started our community-wide testing and that is available at three locations in Santa Maria in Lompoc and in Santa Barbara anyone can be tested at these three community testing sites they are available seven days a week from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. So far we're getting less than 1% positivity rate so that is good but for those have a positive test I'd like to talk a little bit about contact tracing it goes hand in hand with testing widely so contact tracing is a critical tool that Public Health uses to stopping the spread of the virus by helping to diagnose people earlier and reducing the chance of spread so once a person test positive for COVID-19 a nurse investigator conducts an initial investigation and collects all the essential clinical information then that case is transferred to a tracer who connects with the case and interviews them and get a sense of all the close contacts who may have had exposure. The contacts then are monitored by staff and this means that temperatures symptom checks at regular intervals are done and to protect privacy whenever possible. Contacts are only informed that they may have been exposed and not told the identity of the person who may have exposed. We tell them to self-isolate until 14 days after their last exposure to the confirmed case and if during that monitoring period it's a contact exhibit symptoms we test and the cycle repeats itself and so that is how we are able to box it in keep our community healthy and getting us all to return to fully being reopened.

Mike Powers- Ventura County CEO:

We're keeping our number of positive patients covet patients in the hospital steady and that's one of the key metrics that we're watching and that's a credit to the community's compliance with the stay well at home orders and our businesses that complying and so that has enabled us to move forward as Santa Barbara and other counties are. It is so important we focus on our public health leadership our long-term care facilities and that's been such an area of vulnerability frankly where there's been many outbreaks and so they've instituted a plan where any positive patients there could be taken care of in our local hospitals and that's really helped. Also, doing focus testing on any of those areas if a couple of the staff or the patients. we have been very active in housing our medically fragile homeless and we've got over 340 their house now and we think that's been helpful to contain the virus as well. We're in the process of expanding our testing and tracing capacity. We were able to open the retail curbside of course

May 13 Town Hall: Reopening of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties but also, manufacturing and supply and we just want to let people know that that's bigger than it might seem and you know obviously, it's very important to have our retailers reopened but manufacturing very important, we have a large Oxnard manufacturer. It does Beauty products and so forth and has 2,000 employees and it is the largest employer. Docks are now there fully reopened and in doing so safely.

We also developed our registration site so that businesses could register and meet all the governor's requirements. **All they must do is register and they can reopen - they don't have to get inspected before they do but we also have a verification ambassador program, county and city workforce that go in a consultative way and just check in on the business see how they're doing with their physical distancing plans and just share best practices as well.**

Ventura officials have been working hard to move quickly, which we did the other day when the governor moved into a deeper stage two – offices, outdoor malls, and pet grooming. We're tracking the number of businesses that have reopened, it's up to 968 that we have we are doing everything we can to encourage that and work with our partners like our chambers and our cities to sharing feedback. So, lots more to come. One thing we want people that know, it's not a choice between the health of the business, these measures that we're taking are to improve our health and protect against the spread of the virus. These steps allow us to move forward and reopening our businesses. Things are going to be different going forward and that continuous commitment to physical distancing is going to allow us to reopen and stay open

Dr. Vargas- Ventura Public Health Director:

We have been to expand our tracing efforts and so we've trained up 40 individuals already and expected to train another thirty by early next week and so that allows us to have 7 teams of 10 tracers that will then be able to follow up with at least ten individuals and so we feel very confident comfortable that we have necessary infrastructure to follow any individual that encounter a positive person in Ventura County. Our total count is 725 positive individuals in Ventura County, we have over nine test sites in Ventura County for the community to come in and get tested. Our Public Health Laboratory continues to be busy, today they ran a full shift of tests they're still running.

Bruce Stenslie, Economic Development Collaborative President and CEO:

We are the Small Business Development Center for both Ventura and Santa Barbara counties as designated by the US Small Business Administration. Our role is around business support, understanding needs and values for public health and safety. Ten days ago in Ventura County we've had more than 80,000 unemployment insurance claims filed by local residents, that's 25% of our total labor force and while there's a wide spectrum of individuals there this is definitely and predominantly our most vulnerable populations, low-income workers little in reserve, few employer benefits and concentrated in a couple of key industry sectors. How we go from essential to low-risk businesses a couple of important points that both counties are working very hard on is that is making sure that we've got the resources to meet the governor's requirement or the statewide requirements for opening. We are creating the tools, the counseling, and the networking that helps businesses figure out how they do that because we want to open our businesses not just keeping our consumer faith but of course, keeping our

May 13 Town Hall: Reopening of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties workforce safe. Help business come up with models of e-commerce and social media, how do we manage customer service relationships in a new environment how do we manage supply chains the collection of organizations with EDC or small business center with women's economic ventures with score with partnerships with the cities and the counties we have the resources reach out to us and we'll do everything we can to facilitate a business opening safely and getting this economy back on its feet.

Question & Answer

Q: What are the public health guidelines for keeping seniors safe in senior homes and facilities and how can we ensure that our seniors are being well cared for? I've been visiting my mom in person every day for the last three years making sure she's hydrated and properly taken care of. I want to know about testing and nursing homes, employees and patients alike - also some of the employees work at a different facility down the street or in town possibly taking the virus from one facility to another. I'm not really getting any information from the facilities and I can't visit my mom.

A: Ventura County has been very proactive in taking care of our most vulnerable populations namely our seniors those who have comorbidities and other priority populations. For this one, our health officer has zeroed in on to try to protect in several ways. We have worked very closely with all of our area hospitals to come up with a program by where as long as there was one individual that became positive in a long-term care facility, they were transferred into one of the hospitals and one of the wings to be care for and removed from the location so that the exposure to staff and fellow residents would be minimized and so that program is going well - happy to report that I think we've only had like about seven or eight individuals go through that program that needed transferring. I believe all but one has been returned to the long long-term care facility, but that was an important measure that we took to protect the health of individuals so we've been also offering testing on-site of both supplying the long-term care facilities with equipment supplies, other personal protective equipment and testing whenever there have been one or more cases. We test all staff and all residents of such facilities so we're very proactive in protecting our vulnerable population. In Santa Barbara, we are working hand in hand with our nursing homes making sure that they follow local guidance and we visit them to ensure that infection control procedures are followed I know that nursing homes and outbreaks in a nursing home has severe consequences. We want to encourage that people maintain contact with their loved ones through telephone and video chat so that that contact with friends and loved ones are maintained because I think that interaction and support is important and critical there are several ways to protect skilled nursing and other facility residents we know that staff are wearing masks are using gloves and gowns when necessary and a strategy for regular testing of skilled nursing facility employees is being created by our health department, these are really good practices to help ensure that all the employees who do some of the work in different facilities, are also more active in the community and not carrying the virus or spreading it to the facilities.



ASSEMBLY MEMBER

Monique Limón

DISTRICT 37

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Q: How do we navigate the space between what is permissible and what states especially. For vulnerable members of our population should we really wait to be social for an entire year or wait until there is a vaccine?

A: It really depends on the individual's health status, how much outside the home activities within the parameters can be entertained and I would want to encourage the individual to have that conversation with their provider so that their best health can be maintained.

Q: Can someone address the plan for all levels of child care to reopen from daycare, preschool and elementary through high school? Many parents can't return to work until this is addressed, many of us can't accept jobs and can't get off unemployment insurance until this is addressed.

A: In terms of child care, the governor's order yesterday a business model to open. There are a couple of concerns with that in terms of how effective or how large we can do this. Number one, a lot of child care centers are located on schools and schools are not yet fully open. Secondly, well we're putting some workers back to business for child care to work those are businesses too and they need to be running at near full capacity to really work as a business and so it's sort of a one-step two-step process as we start getting workers back to work and they need childcare and they're putting their kids back in the childcare that can start opening but right now there really isn't that much labor back in the labor force so it's been difficult for childcare centers to open happily. Agencies at the state level are starting to move resources to support childcare expansion, the real problem here though is childcare will be fully open when all the schools are open and that's not immediately on the horizon as part of stage two. Childcare in schools rather are envisioned to be open as part of phase two but haven't been opened yet, we just had a meeting with a community group on schools including our superintendent. Another issue with this is that some schools will be able to open because they probably have the space for social distancing and some protocols and others won't so I know that the schools are struggling with this and they're developing plans and as we speak. We are also thinking on how do we structure the physical environment to really encourage healthy practices in schools and children. The governor also announced that there's resources for families to find child care resources and options so we urge all members listening to look up for those sites.

Q: As we are planning for summer, do you have any guidance on the ability to operate and in-person summer programs and what would it look like?

A: We are seeing summer camps as in the same bucket as child care and so broadly the state's guidance is to treat the child care setting there are recommendations to keeping the summer program then with services to fit the same group of kids with social distancing and disinfection and personal hygiene practices in place. With regards to pools, we did issue some guidance- so for those who are living in Santa Barbara County we want to encourage you to visit our website to look at the guidance. Ventura County we're laying our efforts fully with the state and we don't see pools and summer camps and even the accelerator or expanded stage two so unless things change but if and when it does we'll be ready to provide guidance to our local facilities around it but we just don't see it in stage two.

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Q: We strongly believe that reopening guidelines should be tightened further there must be enforcement, for example yesterday in a store some employees and customers were not wearing masks despite front-door instruction. How will you enforce these and other essential practices? Is there compelling evidence to support workers and patrons to bring face masks and if so why not mandate it as a condition of staying open?

A: From Ventura County's perspective - we've worked with our code enforcement environmental health team along with the city, to create a verification program and they've been very active in going out and visiting the grocery stores and the big-box stores to make sure that they were implementing physical distancing guidelines and only letting certain number of customers in at a time. There were some you know challenges at the beginning to be sure there was some gathering at the very beginning but once the team started going out there the stores were great partners in that. We call it sort of our ambassador verification teams, now they're going out very active at these stores as they're reopening and doing it in a consultative way to make sure that they have a physical distancing policy posted, that there's an employee on site who's responsible for ensuring compliance and that there's a compliance hotline. We have found that there have been one to two businesses that we need to reach out and reinforce the guidelines or the mandates what spelled out in the health officer orders but for the most part we lean towards heavy on the education to change social norms and we have found for the most part that our community want to be in compliance and want to do the right thing. I suggest businesses to go through the County sites and access these guidelines that have been designed for each business model and industry sector - look at those checklists and double down on making sure they've got their compliance in place. It is going to be human nature that employees are going to get a little bit lax about standards because as mentioned by several of us, people are just getting a little bit weary and worn out but we can't let our guard down. We need to make sure that we're reminding them and point them to these guidelines and checklists. **WEBSITE:** <https://edcollaborative.com/covid19/>

Q: When will hair salons and barbershops be allowed to offer services again?

A: Those appear to be stage 3 business models as sort of personal services - the execution of those services are in very close proximity and hand to hand and body to body contact and there are systems that are being put in place and care guides and we will get there in stage 3 but it's not part of stage 2 and we're still midway moving through stage 2.

Q: Can you share with the public what that has been done for Santa Barbara County to open with the COVID-19 numbers from Lompoc?

A: Lompoc started their testing last couple of weeks and because of the mass testing in one of their facilities we have had a significant spike in the number of cases in our county. It's a heavy impact on the number of new cases in our county and so what that means to us is that in the state's variance metrics which is a set of metrics that a county can go through and attest to the state for the ability to speed through the initial opening of stage two - so moving faster than what the state says we can is through an activation phase. The requirement says that we cannot have more than 45 new cases in our county in a 14 day period with the positive cases in



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Lompoc that is wholeheartedly not attainable so as such the public health department with support from our board and our CEOs office emailed the state for reconsideration asking them if we can remove the inmate numbers. We know the board also sent a letter to Governor Newsom for consideration, so we are uncertain what the state's decision will be. Until that gets figured out we will be delayed in our ability to attest for a faster speedier reopening of stage 2.

Closing Remarks:

We are trying to work together we know we're not out of the woods yet we've had in fact 71,000 plus confirmed cases of COVID-19 in California, almost 3,000 deaths, the virus is still out there we need to continue to work together to slow down the spread to try to get back to normal but remember that safety and good health are the primary the most important things that we can be doing for ourselves for our loved ones for our neighbors for our community. Let's all try to help each other while following social distancing measures, let's try to open up our businesses to the extent we can.

You can find information on our websites at

www.asmdc.org/Limon

www.sd19.senate.ca.gov

www.carbajal.house.gov