



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

PRESS RELEASE

Date: April 29, 2020
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COUNTY ANNOUNCES COVID-19 COMMUNITY RECOVERY EFFORTS

To guide Santa Cruz County through the process of reopening the community and the local economy, the County of Santa Cruz is pleased to announce the launch of SAVE Lives Santa Cruz County, led by Margaret Lapiz.

Lapiz will work with the County Health Services Agency with support from Community Foundation Santa Cruz County to increase COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, and quarantine/isolation services. These services are essential to reopening workplaces, community services and schools until a coronavirus vaccine is widely available.

Lapiz has 25 years of experience specializing in health care operations and strategy. As an executive vice president for The Permanente Medical Group, Lapiz successfully led organizational turnaround, growth and transformation efforts across a complex undertaking involving over 9,000 physicians and 38,000 employees with \$14 billion in annual revenue. Most recently, she has been supporting both Netflix and the Aspen Institute with the expansion of their respective executive leadership programs. Lapiz holds both an MBA and Masters of Public Health from UC Berkeley.

Lapiz previously partnered with the County and the Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust to determine the feasibility of purchasing Watsonville Community Hospital, and will begin meeting with business leaders and others to begin creating guidance for the community once testing, tracing and treating is fully underway. She will lead the SAVE Lives Santa Cruz County plan and has the authority to integrate and mobilize resources as necessary.



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The World Health Organization calls the “test, trace, and treat” strategy the backbone of successful response to the pandemic as exemplified by efforts in Singapore, South Korea, and Germany. States across the country are racing to develop and implement the costly and complex strategy, but tests are still not readily available and contact tracing programs are often done manually as effective technology is still in development.

“As we continue the hard work of flattening the curve, we must turn an eye towards large scale recovery efforts. The County is committed to easing the shelter-in-place restrictions so we can jumpstart our economy, but we must have safeguards in place,” said Mimi Hall, director of the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency.

Community Foundation Santa Cruz County has secured funding to help get the community recovery plan into action. The funding will help cover some of the costs related to re-opening the County including Lapiz’ position, enhanced testing capabilities, and contact tracing systems.

“Our work as a community foundation is to bring people, resources and ideas together to accelerate local solutions to our county’s most pressing problems and clearly, recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic will require our local leaders, small business owners, health care professionals, educators and the public to pull together like never before to support the County in their work to protect public health,” Community Foundation CEO Susan True said.