

January 10, 2021

Dear Humboldt County Board of Supervisors Bass, Bohn, Bushnell, Madrone and Wilson:

We are writing to request you make available Humboldt County's specific plan to vaccinate elderly residents against COVID-19. This is the worst public health crisis of this century.

We are writing to you in our role as leaders of the Humboldt State University Emeritus and Retired Faculty & Staff Association (HSU-ERFSA). We represent the retired staff, faculty and administrators at HSU. We have been contacted by several of our members expressing grave concern about the lack of a concrete immunization plan and requesting that we contact you given your responsibility in protecting the county residents during the pandemic.

Humboldt County is experiencing a major crisis. There has been an upsurge in cases; in the five days of January 4-8, 2021, there were approximately 270 new COVID-19 county confirmed cases. Next week the county will most likely again be in Tier 1, Purple & Widespread, the highest tier.

Our members are very concerned that the county has not begun to vaccinate elderly community residents. On television they have seen the elderly, generally 65-older, getting vaccinated against COVID-19 in many other states. All 23 Humboldt County COVID-19 deaths have been people aged 60 and older. Approximately 70% of the hospitalized patients have been 60 and older, clearly identifying the elderly as vulnerable group.

Please, for the sake of the high-risk elderly residents and to save their lives, announce widely what your COVID-19 vaccination plan will be that expedites mass vaccinations for residents once the vaccine is available! It is not reassuring to read that the plan's timing is uncertain. The Public Health Branch is acting as the coordinator for vaccine distribution, but it's the local health care partners who are responsible for actually administering the shots—including the local hospitals, Open Door Community Health Centers and the United Indian Health Services with other partners coming online. Pharmacies have partnered with CDC which recently allowed CVS to vaccinate folks at a local skilled nursing facility.

What is the plan for the local health care partners to give the immunizations? Are there adequate resources available for a mass immunization? Will there be individual appointments, walk in appointments, drive-by mass vaccinations clinics? How will the sites be advertised? These are the things that you need to plan and announce to the residents of Humboldt County.

On the local news, Crescent City was requesting that nurses contact the Del Norte Public Health Department because they needed more health care providers to give the vaccinations. We have not seen a similar announcement for Humboldt County. Are there enough health care providers to give the vaccinations as expeditiously as possible once the vaccine is available? Being able to give the vaccine as soon as it is available will save lives and prevent potential long-term disabilities as a result of contracting COVID-19. We have many retired nurses and doctors who could volunteer to assist the vaccination processes.

We are respectfully requesting that you provide a concrete community immunization plan, including providing adequate financial and health professional resources, so the elderly can know how to register and get their vaccination as soon as it is available in the county.

Sincerely,

HSU-ERFSA Coordinating Committee

Rollin Richmond, Chair, Coordinating Committee, HSU President Emeritus

Jeff Borgeld, Professor Emeritus, Department of Oceanography

Bernadette Cheyne, Professor Emerita, Theatre Arts

Susan Dobie, Retired Lecturer, Department of Communication

Ken Fulgham, Professor Emeritus, Department of Forestry & Wildland Resources

Marshelle Thobaben, Professor Emerita, Nursing Department