



March 19, 2020

Governor Gavin Newsom
State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, California

Dear Governor Newsom:

We commend the steps that you have taken to date to promote health and safety in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and we are confident that you will continue to make the decisions necessary to minimize the impact of this disease on the people of the State of California.

As numbers of confirmed cases of COVID-19 continue to increase across the state, we write to you to express our serious concerns for the residents of the San Joaquin Valley. We believe that the San Joaquin Valley merits particular attention in the midst of this pandemic, in light of our historic health care access issues and low provider-to-patient ratios.

As you know, our healthcare systems are already overburdened. The San Joaquin Valley has the lowest physician to patient ratios in the state. As of 2016, the State of California had an average of 288 actively licensed MDs for every 100,000 people, while the San Joaquin Valley had 157 MDs per 100,000 people.¹ In some places, the shortage is particularly acute, such as Merced County, which had only 91 active MDs per 100,000 people – the lowest in the San Joaquin Valley.² The San Joaquin Valley also has high numbers of people with pre-existing medical conditions, such as asthma and cardiovascular disease, that appear to make them more vulnerable to becoming severely ill from COVID-19.³

As each moment passes, we all know that the State's response is critical. As representatives from the San Joaquin Valley, we implore you to ensure that the State's response is equitable across all parts of this state. To that end, we ask that you consider designating a member of your administration's response team as a rural response liaison to provide additional assistance in light of the stark healthcare access realities that we already face.

¹ https://www.ucop.edu/uc-health/_files/sjv-health-workforce-report-july-2017.pdf

² https://www.ucop.edu/uc-health/_files/sjv-health-workforce-report-july-2017.pdf

³ <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>

Again, we thank you for your leadership as we all navigate this challenging time and appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Assemblymember Adam C. Gray
21st Assembly District



Assemblymember Heath Flora
12th Assembly District



Senator Cathleen Galgiani
5th Senate District



Assemblymember Frank Bigelow
5th Assembly District



Senator Andreas Borgeas
8th Senate District