

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

May 26, 2020

Assisting Families during this Public Health Crisis by Expanding COVID-19 Testing Through the Department of the Medical Examiner-Coroner

One of the most important responsibilities of the Department of the Medical Examiner-Coroner (DMEC) is to investigate unexpected and untimely deaths in the County. In the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the number of COVID-19-related cases over which the DMEC takes jurisdiction is small, compared to those handled by the various hospital systems in the County. Also, DMEC employs protocols to ensure that, where COVID-19 may have been a factor in the cause of death, safe testing for the coronavirus is performed

Nonetheless, families who believe that COVID-19 may have played a part in the passing of their loved ones who were unable to be tested in a timely manner, are concerned about whether COVID-19 was a factor causing their death. Family members may also be concerned about their own risk of infection if they have been in recent contact with their loved one before their passing. This has made the grieving process for families a lot more stressful and challenging.

MOTION

SOLIS _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

KUEHL _____

HAHN _____

BARGER _____

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Department of the Medical Examiner, in consultation with County Counsel, Department of Public Health, Department of Health Services, and other relevant departments, to report back in 14 days with:

1. Criteria to determine the circumstances under which a recently deceased person may be tested for COVID-19, and the procedures and protocols for testing, even if the Department of the Medical Examiner-Coroner has not otherwise taken jurisdiction of the death;
2. Options to make information available such as a website or phone number for members of the public to contact the Department of the Medical Examiner-Coroner to seek guidance on whether a recently deceased person would be able to receive testing through the Department of the Medical Examiner-Coroner.

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HLS: rk: jy: rt