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## Commentary: Northern Sonoma County Healthcare District Board of Directors stand united in solidarity on the fight for equity in health care

By Erin Gore  
Jun 10, 2020

From the onset of the pandemic in Sonoma County, our nurses, physician partners and staff have stepped up in heroic ways to meet the challenges of COVID-19. As outbreaks have occurred across the country, Healdsburg District Hospital has dedicated numerous resources to prepare for the virus' impact here in our community. The district board could not be more proud of our entire team for their commitment to their patients during this uncertain and stressful time. The preparation and management of the pandemic has unfortunately created an extraordinary financial strain on the district hospital, which we are working vigorously to address. As the district board, we stand in solidarity with our team members who are making valiant efforts to save our community members, and have made sacrifices to help save our hospital.

At a time when county leadership is beginning to



reopen our economy, it is important to remember that COVID-19 continues to attack our community. While we have all been personally affected by the economic shut down and stay-at-home orders, the district board applauds the thoughtful approach of county leadership in balancing the extremely difficult decisions to restart our economy while protecting our community. As a district board, we stand in solidarity with Sonoma County Health Officer Dr. Sundari Mase's leadership.



What this pandemic has shown here in Sonoma County is that its most powerful weapon is inequity. This pandemic discriminates because its risk is weighted heavily toward our black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) community members due to the system inequities in our society. Latinx people represent 27% of our county, yet constitute more than 72% of our total COVID-19 cases, and a striking 95% of cases under 18 years old. The district board is committed to becoming a better ally by listening, learning, and being accountable to take action. We have begun working with local BIPOC members and leaders to learn what we can do to dismantle systemic racism in health care and how we can mobilize our privilege to effect change. As a district board, we stand in solidarity with our BIPOC community members to be better allies for the health of everyone.

Healdsburg District Hospital and its associated clinics provide a safe environment with highly-skilled staff and physicians ready to serve all of our community's members' health care needs. We are better together, and we invite you to join us on our mission.

*Erin Gore, Chairwoman, on behalf of the Board of Directors, Northern Sonoma County Healthcare District, Healdsburg District Hospital.*

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