

March 12, 2021

Governor Gavin Newsom
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Drafting Guidelines Workgroup

Co-Chairperson Oliver Brooks, MD, CMO, Watts Health Care Corporation and Immediate Past President, NMA (National Medical Association)

Co-Chairperson Robert Schechter, MD, MPH, Chief, Immunizations Branch, CDPH

Community Advisory Vaccine Committee

California Surgeon General Nadine Burke Harris, MD

CC:

Dr. Tomás Aragón, Public Health Director
California Department of Public Health
PO Box 997377, MS 0500
Sacramento, CA 95899

RE: Vaccinate All 58 and Immigrant Detention

This is the third letter we are writing to you regarding the lack of a vaccination plan for immigrants in detention facilities in the state of California. We previously submitted letters to the administration and this Committee on December 16, 2020 and January 26, 2021. To date, we have not been provided any response to our letters, nor has the state been able to answer basic questions with respect to whether or not it views these facilities as part of its vaccine distribution responsibility.

The lack of response to our specific inquiries is particularly concerning in light of the conflicting reports and statements provided to the Los Angeles Times (See Feb. 27, 2021 article "*More people are going to die': Immigrant detainees wonder when they'll get vaccinated*" by Andrea Castillo) on the issue. This includes:

- Statements by the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency that they have been providing COVID-19 vaccines to immigrants detained in the Otay Mesa Detention facility.
- Statements by San Bernardino County public health officials stating that they are waiting for direction from the state on providing vaccines to immigrants detained in the Adelanto detention facility.
- Statements by Immigration and Customs Enforcement claiming that vaccines for immigrants in detention are being allocated by local and state health departments and were incorporated into the COVID-19 vaccine shipments distributed by the federal government to each state.

- Statements by Governor Newsom that “Federal detention facilities operate uniquely and distinctively from the state.”

These statements have been made despite the California Attorney General recently releasing a report on immigration detention that explicitly states: "Public and private detention facilities in California are subject to both state and local health standards and are evaluated by local health officials," referencing California Code, Health and Safety Code - HSC § 101045.¹

We remind you that the vast majority of individuals held in immigration detention in the state of California are held in private for-profit detention facilities, with an abysmal track record with respect to health, safety and human rights.

While California has administered over 10.6 million vaccines, ranking sixth on the global stage, the state has been unable to formulate a plan to safeguard immigrant detention facilities. We remain troubled by the lack of transparency and accountability on this matter, particularly while human lives remain at risk. Therefore we ask for a third and final time that a clear response be provided with respect to this issue. We do not believe that it is either prudent or appropriate to accept any further delays with respect to clarifying state policy on this issue.

Sincerely,

/s
Jackie Gonzalez
Policy Director
Immigrant Defense Advocates
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/s
Lisa Knox
Legal Director
California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice
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Organizational Sign-ons

1. Secure Justice
2. Central American Resource Center - CARECEN - of California
3. Doctors for Camp Closure -- Northern California
4. San Francisco Immigrant Legal & Education Network
5. NorCal Resist
6. Long Beach Immigrant Rights Coalition
7. Hand in Hand: The Domestic Employers Network
8. Kern Welcoming and Extending Solidarity to Immigrants
9. Law Office of Helen Lawrence
10. California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance
11. National Center for Lesbian Rights
12. North Bay Rapid Response Network: Napa, Solano and Sonoma Counties
13. Immigrant Legal Resource Center

¹ The California Department of Justice’s Review of Immigration Detention in California January 2021, <https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/publications/immigration-detention-2021.pdf> pg 17

14. Bay Area Asylum Support Coalition (BAASC)
15. Asylum-seekers Sponsorship Project
16. California Immigrant Policy Center
17. Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement
18. Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
19. Athens United Immigrant Support Project
20. Coastside Immigrant Advocacy Group
21. Community Legal Services
22. CRLA Foundation
23. African Advocacy Network
24. San Joaquin College of Law - New American Legal Clinic
25. Dolores Street Community Services
26. Immigrant Legal Defense
27. NLG-SF Bay Area Immigration Justice Committee
28. ACLU — CA
29. NorCal Resist
30. Disability Justice League - Bay Area
31. Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity
32. Desert Support for Asylum Seekers
33. Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice
34. Kehilla Community Synagogue
35. Freedom For Immigrants
36. Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project
37. Episcopal Peace Fellowship
38. Faith In Action Bay Area
39. Asian American Pacific Islander Christians for Social Justice
40. Keck Human Rights Clinic
41. American Friends Service Committee-San Diego
42. Bay Area Immigration Bond Fund
43. VIDAS Legal Services (North Bay)
44. Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity
45. SIREN (Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network)
46. LA Human Rights Initiative
47. Public Counsel
48. Immigrant Defenders Law Center
49. Human Rights First
50. USC Gould School of Law Immigration Clinic
51. Presbyterian Church USA
52. Pangea Legal Services
53. Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)

54. Immigration Task Force
55. Rapid Response Network of Monterey County
56. Long Beach Immigration Forum
57. Becker & Lee LLP (Franco/Indigent Defense Provider)
58. National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Long Beach & West Orange County Section
59. Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative (CVIIC)
60. Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto
61. NextGen Policy