

**Before the Board of Supervisors in and for the
County of Monterey, State of California**

Resolution No.:

Adopt a resolution Declaring “COVID-19 Health Misinformation a Public Health Crisis” in Monterey County.

WHEREAS, Health misinformation has significantly undermined public health efforts and the unmitigated proliferation of health misinformation has created a culture of mistrust and has prolonged the COVID-19 pandemic, endangering the health and safety of all Monterey County residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has resulted in 44,974 cases and resulted in 546 deaths in Monterey County as of September 7, 2021; and

WHEREAS, The spread of COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on our health and safety, our regional economy, our communities of color, the educational development of our children and every aspect of our lives; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 vaccines have met the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) rigorous scientific standards for safety, effectiveness, and manufacturing quality and have been proven to be safe and effective; and

WHEREAS, The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has received full FDA approval and been proven to be highly effective in preventing serious disease, hospitalization and death from COVID-19 and that its benefits outweigh its risks; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 vaccine is available in Monterey County at no cost, regardless of income, and is administered by health professionals, such as nurses and doctors; and

WHEREAS, Misinformation has caused confusion and nationally, has led to eligible people declining COVID-19 vaccines, rejecting public health measures, such as masking and physical distancing, and using unproven treatments; and

WHEREAS, On July 15, 2021, the United States Surgeon General issued his first advisory describing the “urgent threat” posed by the rise of false information of COVID-19 – one that continues to put “lives at risk” and prolong the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Recent surges in infections and hospitalizations from COVID-19 have highlighted the importance of clear and unequivocal communications from public officials that vaccines are the best protection against severe illness and hospitalizations; and

WHEREAS, Urgent action is needed to curb the spread of the Delta variant by combating misinformation, thereby supporting our healthcare system and saving lives; and

WHEREAS, There would be substantial detriment on Monterey County and its residents and visitors if not acted upon immediately; and

WHEREAS, Monterey County recognizes the vaccine hesitency, that stands in the way of Monterey County moving beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, is being fueled by the spread of health misinformation, and commits to strategies to actively combat health misinformation.

WHEREAS, Trusted community members, such as health professionals, faith leaders, leaders of color and educators have spoken directly to their communities to address COVID-19 related questions by town halls, meetings, social media, and traditional media; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Monterey County Board of Supervisors, on behalf of the County and all its residents thereof, declares “COVID-19 Health Misinformation a Public Health Crisis” throughout Monterey County, and that the County of Monterey should commit to combat health misinformation and curb the spread of falsehoods that threaten the health and safety of our residents and visitors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Monterey County Board of Supervisors directs as follows:

1. Requests that Monterey County Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and the Monterey County Health Department implement the strategies cited by the U.S. Surgeon General Vivek H. Murthy in his advisory entitled “Confronting Health Misinformation,” and report back within 90 days on the status of implementation and within 180 days upon completion; and
2. Identify and label health misinformation and disseminate timely health information to counter misinformation that is impeding our ability to keep our community safe; and
3. Modernize public health communications with investments to better understand gaps in health information, and questions and concerns of the community, especially in hard-to reach communities.
4. Continue to focus on community engagement strategies, including partnerships with trusted messengers and the Monterey County VIDA program; and
5. Expand our research efforts to better define and understand the sources of health misinformation, document and trace its costs and negative impacts, and develop strategies to address and counter it across mediums and diverse communities; and
6. Invest in resilience against health misinformation, including digital resources and training for health practitioners and health workers. Explore educational programs to help our communities distinguish evidence-based information from opinion and personal stories; and
7. Partner with federal, state, territorial, tribal, private, nonprofit, research and other local entities to identify best practices to stop the spread of health misinformation and develop and implement coordinated recommendations; and
8. Work with the medical community and local partners to enhance our County of Monterey website that will serve as a central resource for combating health misinformation in our community; and

PASSED AND ADOPTED on this ____ day of _____, 2021, upon motion of Supervisor _____, seconded by Supervisor _____ by the following vote, to-wit:

AYES:

NOES:
ABSENT:

I, Valerie Ralph, Clerk to the Board of Supervisors of the County of Monterey, State of California, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of an original order of said Board of Supervisors duly made and entered in the minutes thereof Minute Book_____ for the meeting on_____.

Dated:

Valerie Ralph, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
County of Monterey, State of California

By_____ Deputy