



# BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

RICHARD VALLE  
President  
Board of Supervisors

April 23, 2020

**SENT VIA EMAIL**  
[naboelata@alamedahealthsystem.org](mailto:naboelata@alamedahealthsystem.org)

Noha Aboelata, M.D.  
President, Alameda Health System  
1411 E. 31<sup>st</sup> Street  
Oakland, CA 94602

To the President and Board of Trustees of the Alameda Health System:

This letter confirms disappointment and dismay at the outcome of the first planned joint site visit by the Alameda Health System Board of Trustees/County Liaison team.

As requested by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, and in partnership with Alameda Health System Board of Trustees COVID-19 Task Force, a site visit to Alameda Hospital was planned for this morning. The site visit, which was requested by the Board of Supervisors more than three weeks ago, was planned collaboratively on a call yesterday with Trustees Ross Peterson and Dr. Taft Bhuket, both representatives of the BOT COVID-19 Task Force, together with Dr. Kathleen Clanon, Medical Director of Health Care Services Agency, and Jet Chapman, Human Resources Director for HCSA.

During the call, the joint team discussed the goals of the site visit, agreeing upon the goal of balanced fact-finding and the importance of reaching a mutual understanding of the actual conditions on the ground, in order to respond appropriately to safety concerns raised by staff. The team reviewed interview questions and agreed on methods for gaining honest feedback from staff. The team then discussed the logistics of the visit and reviewed the letter that would be sent to the executive leadership just prior to the visit. All agreed that, in order to ensure a frank and credible visit, it was best not to provide too much notice of the visit; the letter was sent this morning. Pursuant to the terms of the master contract between the County and AHS, the County is entitled to access AHS premises to observe operations and evaluate performance. County staff worked with your trustees to find a reasonable and agreed upon time for this visit to occur.

Throughout this month, the County Liaison team has attempted to do our due diligence to follow up on a litany of issues raised by physicians, nurses, and others. The team listened to representatives and members of CNA and SEIU and received frequent communications about specific issues and concerns on the part of the AHS employees. Themes that emerged from these communications include:

- Lack of availability and constrained access to PPE
- Inconsistent practices between managers, sites, and units
- Insufficient training and opportunities to practice use of equipment
- Unclear and inconsistent policies and criteria regarding when patients should be tested for COVID-19
- How co-workers are notified and protected when a fellow employee tests positive for COVID-19.

Unfortunately, a lack of trust between management and workers is apparent in these communications.

These are serious concerns. The purpose of the site visits is to observe directly whether they are accurate and assess how widespread they are. The spirit of the joint team was to see this as a chance to identify opportunities for collaboration, for improvement in safety and communication, and also for the County to support AHS and its healthcare workforce to be ready to respond to the pandemic effectively.

The Board of Supervisors' delegates attempted to work in concert with the Board of Trustees. A detailed plan was developed with the two trustees who were representing the AHS BOT Task Force, and the plan was interrupted by the President of your Board even though the trustees involved arrived as scheduled for the visit.

As elected officials, we cannot ignore the concerns of our constituents. However, we have done everything we can to work with AHS in a cooperative manner to understand the situation at the hospital sites. We are dedicated to working collaboratively with the AHS Board and Administration, but we are not finding the same openness on the part of the Board of Trustees. This development is in violation of the County's contractual rights, and the denial of access cannot continue.

The County looks forward to rescheduling this visit timely, and expects the Board of Trustees to facilitate rather than block these visits. These matters are time sensitive. Thank you for your understanding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Valle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard Valle  
President, Alameda County Board of Supervisors

cc: Other Members, Board of Supervisors  
Other Members, Alameda Health System Board of Trustees  
Clerk of the Board, Alameda Health System  
Chief Executive Officer, Alameda Health System  
County Administrator  
County Counsel  
Director, Health Care Services Agency