

LEGAL ADVOCACY UNIT

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Via email

March 18, 2020

Rick Heyer Supervising County Counsel P.O. Box 988 Sacramento, CA 95812-0988 heyerr@saccounty.net

Chief Deputy Santos Ramos Correctional Services Sacramento County Sheriff's Office sramos@sacsheriff.com

Re: Mays v. County of Sacramento (E.D. Cal.), No. 2:18-cv-02081-TLN-KJN Necessary Actions at County Jail for COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Mr. Heyer and Chief Ramos:

We write as class counsel in *Mays v. County of Sacramento* (E.D. Cal., Case No. 2:18-cv-02081-TLN-KJN), representing people held in custody at the Sacramento County Jail (the "Jail"). The *Mays* case seeks to remedy well-documented and longstanding deficiencies in the conditions and access to health care that people incarcerated at the Jail experience. As you know, a federal court approved the parties' settlement, including a Consent Decree and detailed remedial plan, in January 2020.

We recognize that efforts to implement provisions of the remedial plan will be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, this public health crisis poses extraordinary risks to the health and safety of *Mays* class members. The Consent Decree in the *Mays* litigation addresses deficiencies addressed in the *Mays* lawsuit, some of which directly apply to this pandemic. *See, e.g.*, Remedial Plan § VI.B.3 (requirement for adequate medical intake screening consistent with community standards); § VI.K.1 (requirement to address issues of cleanliness and sanitation that adversely impact health); § VIII.A.3 (requirement to end prolonged solitary confinement for people with acute medical needs that require an inpatient care); § VI.G (requirement to ensure that patients in acute medical or quarantine placements have appropriate access to property and privileges).

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COVID-19 is extremely dangerous for people in certain population groups that are remarkably prevalent in the Jail. People over the age of fifty are considered to be at substantial risk, and people over 70 are at the most serious risk. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued guidance that certain medical conditions and disabilities increase the risk of COVID-19 for people of any age, including: lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, conditions that make a person immunocompromised (e.g., cancer, HIV/AIDS, autoimmune disease), blood disorders (including sickle cell disease), chronic liver or kidney disease, metabolic disorders, stroke, developmental delay, and pregnancy.

The CDC has identified COVID-19 as spreading easily from person-toperson. It has warned that the risk of exposure is greatest in crowded, confined spaces with limited ventilation and air circulation. The federal government has indicated that crowds of more than ten people should be avoided for the next several weeks, at a minimum.

The Jail's crowded, confined, and limited-ventilation facilities create a grave risk of COVID-19 transmission to a Jail population with high risk factors. The risk of mass transmission is heightened by the number of Jail staff coming in and out of the facility and the poor sanitation and hygiene in the facilities.

The County is aware that the Jail's health care facilities are ill-equipped even in normal times. The former chief of correctional services stated that the facilities are "severely outdated and inadequate for providing services to our inmate population." Notably, as part of the *Mays* settlement, the County agreed to "consult with an Environment of Care expert to evaluate facilities where patients are housed and/or receive clinical treatment, and to make written recommendations to address issues of cleanliness and sanitation that may adversely impact health." Remedial Plan § VI.K.1. Unfortunately, this Environment of Care evaluation and any consequent remediation efforts have not yet occurred.

The Jail also lacks adequate facilities to quarantine or medically isolate people who have symptoms of COVID-19 or report recent exposure to the virus. We are aware of multiple people in custody at the Sacramento County Jail in recent days who have been subject to "Total Separation" in non-medical isolation units based on possible COVID-19 exposure. While we do not endorse exposing potential COVID-19 patients to other people detained or working in the Jail, it is important to note that prolonged and harsh solitary confinement practices were among the most serious constitutional violations at issue in the *Mays* lawsuit. To the extent that isolation is necessary in the Jail to reduce the likelihood of

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transmission it should be in line with medical isolation protocols and based on an individualized clinical determination. (Our current understanding is that people are held in isolation if they are identified as having symptoms of or possible exposure to the virus and are awaiting COVID-19 test results, which can take up to four days. For anyone who receives a negative test result, they are returned to normal housing. If anyone receives a positive test result, they will be placed in a designated quarantine housing unit that allows for daily and regular out-of-cell time.)

Staff should ensure that isolated individuals have additional property and privileges, such as iPads, books, and writing materials, to compensate for the social isolation.

In short, the consequences of COVID-19 spreading through the Jail population would be devastating. If the virus does spread through the Jail, the likelihood that numerous *Mays* class members would require acute medical care is substantial. Such care would necessarily require transport to emergency medical facilities in the community, risking significant strain on health care resources that would adversely impact the general public.

It is critical to the protection of *Mays* class members, Jail staff, and the broader community to take bold action now. This requires reducing the existing Jail population (in particular, of people in high-risk groups), limiting the flow of new people into Jail custody, and taking proactive measures in the Jail to ensure people's health and well-being.

Safe Reductions to the Jail Population. We were pleased to see that the Sheriff's Department received authorization from the Sacramento Superior Court to grant accelerated release of prisoners, up to thirty days early on a person's sentence, effective through May 31, 2020. 3/17/20 Standing Order, No. SSC-20—. We strongly encourage the County to explore and implement other mechanisms to safely reduce the jail population, including through (1) a broader early release order, (2) work release arrangements (*see*, *e.g.*, Penal Code § 4024.2, including subsection (b)(1)(F) addressing people with special needs related to medical condition, physical disability, or age), and (3) expanded pretrial release.

¹ The California Constitution allows courts to release people on their own recognizance "in the court's discretion." Article 1, Section 12. Section 1275 of the California Penal Code states the considerations in setting bail, and makes clear that

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Procedures akin to compassionate release should be strongly considered for people in high-risk groups.

The *Mays* Consent Decree and Remedial Plan expressly recognize that Jail population reduction measures designed to promote public safety are a cost-effective means to achieve constitutional and statutory standards. Remedial Plan § I.B. The current public health crisis serves only to accentuate this fact.

Limiting Flow of New People into Jail Custody. The County should direct law enforcement to cite and release all those who are eligible pursuant to Penal Code § 853.6, rather than booking them and potentially introducing COVID-19 into the Jail system.

Incarceration for technical or other non-violent parole or probation violations should also cease.

Proactive Measures in the Jail to Ensure Health and Well-Being. The most basic aspect of infection control is hygiene, including ready access to soap (for handwashing and for cleaning) and hand sanitizer, timely access to medical advice and care, and comprehensive sanitation and cleaning of facilities. These products should be provided to all people incarcerated in the Jail, free of charge, absent an individualized determination regarding substantial likelihood of misuse.

Any plan to address this crisis must provide for additional precautions for those people who remain in the Jail and are at high risk if infected by the virus,

"[i]n setting, reducing, or denying bail, a judge or magistrate shall take into consideration the protection of the public" and that "public safety shall be the primary consideration." Under the extraordinary circumstances we face today, public safety requires that as few people as possible circulate through the Jail system. We encourage presumptive release on recognizance for as many people as possible, particularly for vulnerable populations, as described above.

The Hon. Nathanael Cousins of the United States Court for the Northern District of California, for example, has issued a standing order (attached) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, following analogous federal law. The order authorizes the reopening of pretrial detention hearings to reconsider the appropriateness of release pending trial for people based on their health condition as well as public safety.

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such as older adults, pregnant women and people with chronic illnesses, compromised immune systems, or disabilities.

People housed in the jails must be informed about the virus and the measures they can take to minimize their risk of contracting or spreading the virus. The California State prison system's California Correctional Health Care Services (CCHCS) has created a Coronavirus/COVID-19 Facts and FAQs document (attached) that can be distributed and posted in a manner accessible to all people in custody at the Sacramento County Jail. Verbal or other means of communication of this information should be provided for people with disability or other individual needs (visual or intellectual disabilities, etc.). These materials offer a useful model for you to use.

Finally, we understand that the Sheriff's Department has taken the step to suspend in-person visitation at the Jail to prevent the spread of COVID-19. While in-person visitation raises virus transmission risk, incarcerated people must be able to communicate with their families, loved ones, and legal counsel, particularly under these stressful and constantly evolving circumstances. We strongly encourage the County to provide all people in Jail custody phone and/or video calls free of cost during this crisis. Other jurisdictions, such as CDCR, Shelby County, Tennessee and others, have already taken this simple and important step. (New York City has shifted to free phone calls permanently.)

As the County of Sacramento and the Sheriff's Department consider the steps we urge in this letter, we ask that you provide a response to the following questions as soon as possible. We are available for a phone call to discuss these important matters.

- 1. Have the Sheriff's Department and Adult Correctional Health (ACH) developed specific COVID-19 written policies or protocols? If yes, please provide a copy.
- 2. What steps, in addition to the Superior Court's March 17 standing order authorizing early releases, have been taken or will be taken in light of the COVID-19 pandemic to reduce the Jail population and to limit the flow of new people into the Jail?
- 3. What measures is the Jail taking to protect people with elevated COVID-19-related health risks, including pregnant women and people with chronic illnesses, compromised immune systems, or disabilities?

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- 4. What measures is the Jail taking to identify people with COVID-19 exposure, both at booking/intake and inside the Jail housing units?
- 5. What steps have been taken to ensure that Jail facilities have adequate soap, handwashing stations, wet wipes, and sanitizer readily available to people in custody as well as staff? Are there any restrictions or costs related to the provision of these supplies? If so, does the Jail intend to modify those policies?
- 6. What updates has the Jail made to cleaning practices (wiping down of surface areas, durable medical equipment/assistive technology, hand rails, grab bars, door handles, phones, tables, etc.)?
- 7. How is information about COVID-19 being provided to people in custody at the Jail? Is the information provided in accessible locations and formats?
- 8. What is the Sheriff's Department and ACH's capacity to test for COVID-19? How many people in Jail custody have been quarantined based on possible COVID-19 exposure? How many have received COVID-19 testing? Have any COVID-19 cases amongst people who are or recently have been inside the Jail been confirmed? If so, how many, and what steps were taken in response? (We request updated information on these matters as events unfold.)

Thank you, as always, for your attention and ongoing efforts.

Sincerely,

/s/ Aaron J. Fischer /s/ Margot Mendelson

Aaron J. Fischer Margot Mendelson Disability Rights California Prison Law Office

Encls.: CCCHS COVID-19 FAQs, Standing Order of the Hon. Nathanael Cousins

Cc: Sandy Damiano, Adult Correctional Health
Alex McCamy, Sacramento County Sheriff's Department
Timothy Zindel, Federal Defenders
Steven Garrett, Sacramento County Public Defender's Office
Anne-Marie Schubert, Sacramento County District Attorney

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CORONAVIRUS/COVID-19 FACTS AND FAQS

What is a coronavirus and what is COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

How did this virus get its name?

On Feb. 11, 2020, the World Health Organization announced the official name for the new coronavirus virus would be COVID-19. "CO" stands for "corona," "VI" stands for "virus," D stands for "disease" and 19 indicates the year the virus was first discovered. Before this, the virus was referred to as the "2019 novel coronavirus," which means it was a new strain not previously identified in humans.

Where did COVID-19 come from?

The World Health Organization states that coronaviruses are zoonotic, which means they are transmitted from animals to people. A specific animal source of COVID-19 has not been identified, but the virus has been linked to a large seafood and live animal market.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), individuals diagnosed with this coronavirus experience a mild to severe respiratory illness. Symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Individuals with severe complications from the virus often develop pneumonia in both lungs.

How does the virus spread?

The virus is spread person-to-person. According to the CDC, spread is happening mainly between people who are in close contact (within 6 feet) of each other via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The droplets land on the noses and mouths of other people, who then inhale them. The CDC says it may be possible for the virus to spread by touching a surface or object with the virus and then a person touching their mouth, nose or eyes, but this is not thought to be the main method of spread. As the virus was discovered just a few months ago, more research is required to learn more about the spread pattern of the virus. The incubation period ranges from 2 to 14 days after exposure (most cases occurring at approximately 5 days.) People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest.) Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms.

Do I need to wear a protective mask?

There is no need for healthy individuals to wear surgical masks to guard against coronavirus. Individuals should only wear a mask if they are ill or if it is recommended by a health care professional. Masks must be used and disposed of properly to be effective.

Is there a cure for the virus?

There is no specific medication to treat COVID-19; supportive care is provided to treat symptoms. There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. Individuals should take care to avoid being exposed to the virus through hygiene and sanitary practices. Please seek immediate medical care to relieve symptoms if infected with the virus.

How do I protect myself and others?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 or medication to directly treat COVID-19. The best way to protect yourself is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19. The CDC recommends maintaining personal preventative actions such as:

- Avoiding close contact with those who are sick
- Not touching your eyes, mouth or nose, especially with unwashed hands
- Washing your hands often with soap and warm water for last least 20 seconds
- Clean objects and surfaces that are frequently touched
- Limit your exposure to others if you are sick
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue
- Do not share food, drinks, utensils, or toothbrushes

What should I do if I think I have COVID-19?

Avoid direct contact with other people and immediately request to be seen by health care if you feel sick with a fever, cough or difficulty breathing. Make sure to give your provider details of any symptoms and potential contact with individuals who may have recently traveled.

Will I be tested for COVID-19?

You will be tested if your provider suspects you have COVID-19.

What is CDCR/CCHCS doing to prepare for a potential outbreak?

CDCR and CCHCS are dedicated to the safety of everyone who lives, works, and visits our state prisons. We have longstanding emergency response plans in place to address communicable disease outbreaks such as influenza, measles, mumps, norovirus, as well as coronavirus. Based on guidance from the CDC, and to ensure we are as prepared as possible to respond to any exposure to COVID-19 specifically, we are building upon the robust influenza infection control guidelines already in place at each institution. These guidelines clearly define procedures for prevention of transmission, management of suspected and confirmed cases including isolation and quarantine protocols, surveillance of patients, and routine cleaning and disinfection procedures.

If there is a suspected case of COVID-19, we will follow the policies and procedures already in place for modified programming for any affected housing units and areas. We will continue to update guidelines for COVID-19 response based on CDC recommendations and will maintain cooperation with local and state health departments and the law enforcement community.

COVID-19 is new, but the most important aspect of preparedness is remaining calm. Don't panic. We understand staff, families, and those who visit state prisons as program providers or volunteers may have concerns and anxiety about COVID-19, but please be assured that there is no need for alarm. All should follow the precautions recommended by CDC, which expand upon precautions advised during cold and flu season. The spread of COVID-19 can be significantly reduced with proper infection control measures and good individual hygiene practices.





Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.



Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.



Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning

to end twice.



Rinse hands well under clean, running water.



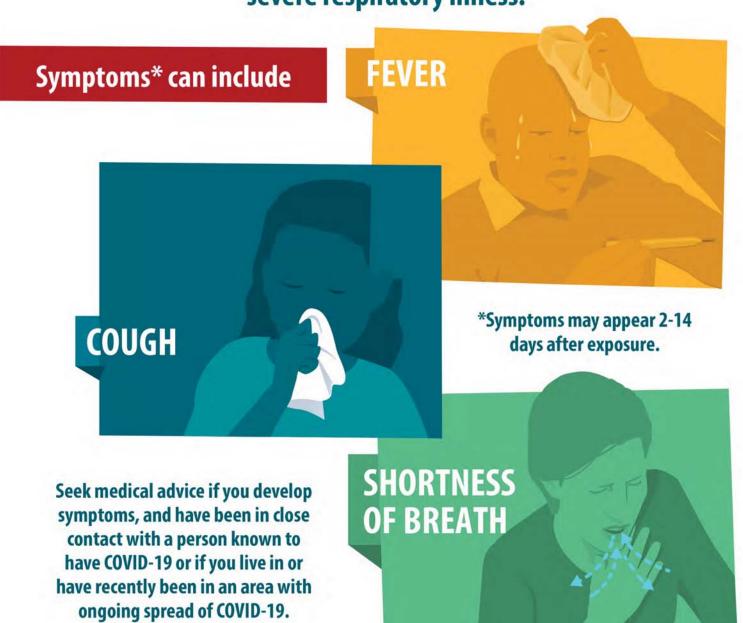
Dry hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

WASH YOUR HANDS FREQUENTLY



SYMPTOMS OF CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019

Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness.



If you have symptoms of COVID-19, please complete a form 7362 and let someone know immediately.

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PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

Good health habits like covering your cough and washing your hands often can help stop the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses. Protect yourself and others from viral illnesses and help stop the spread of germs.

Avoid close contact

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

Keep your germs to yourself

As much as possible, stay in your housing area away from others when you are sick. This will help prevent spreading your illness to others.

Cover your nose and mouth

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick. Flu and other serious respiratory illnesse are spread by cough, sneezing, or unclean hands.

Handwashing: clean hands save lives!

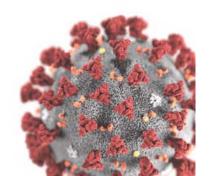
Washing your hands is easy, and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

Practice other good health habits

Clean frequently touched surfaces especially when you or someone you share space with is ill. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.



Lo que necesita saber sobre la enfermedad del coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19)

¿Qué es la enfermedad del coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19)?

La enfermedad del coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) es una afección respiratoria que se puede propagar de persona a persona. El virus que causa el COVID-19 es un nuevo coronavirus que se identificó por primera vez durante la investigación de un brote en Wuhan, China.

¿Pueden las personas en los EE. UU. contraer el COVID-19?

Sí. El COVID-19 se está propagando de persona a persona en partes de los Estados Unidos. El riesgo de infección con COVID-19 es mayor en las personas que son contactos cercanos de alguien que se sepa que tiene el COVID-19, por ejemplo, trabajadores del sector de la salud o miembros del hogar. Otras personas con un riesgo mayor de infección son las que viven o han estado recientemente en un área con propagación en curso del COVID-19.

¡Ha habido casos de COVID-19 en los EE. UU.?

Sí. El primer caso de COVID-19 en los Estados Unidos se notificó el 21 de enero del 2020.

¿Cómo se propaga el COVID-19?

Es probable que el virus que causa el COVID-19 haya surgido de una fuente animal, pero ahora se está propagando de persona a persona. Se cree que el virus se propaga principalmente entre las personas que están en contacto cercano unas con otras (dentro de 6 pies de distancia), a través de las gotitas respiratorias que se producen cuando una persona infectada tose o estornuda. También podría ser posible que una persona contraiga el COVID-19 al tocar una superficie u objeto que tenga el virus y luego se toque la boca, la nariz o posiblemente los ojos, aunque no se cree que esta sea la principal forma en que se propaga el virus.

¿Cuáles son los síntomas del COVID-19?

Los pacientes con COVID-19 han tenido enfermedad respiratoria de leve a grave con los siguientes síntomas:

- fiebre
- · tos
- dificultad para respirar

¿Cuáles son las complicaciones graves provocadas por este virus?

¿Qué puedo hacer para ayudar a protegerme?

Las personas se pueden proteger de las enfermedades respiratorias tomando medidas preventivas cotidianas.

- · Evite el contacto cercano con personas enfermas.
- Evite tocarse los ojos, la nariz y la boca con las manos sin lavar.
- Lávese frecuentemente las manos con agua y jabón por al menos 20 segundos. Use un desinfectante de manos que contenga al menos un 60 % de alcohol si no hay agua y jabón disponibles.

Si está enfermo, para prevenir la propagación de la enfermedad respiratoria a los demás, debería hacer lo siguiente:

- · Quedarse en casa si está enfermo.
- Cubrirse la nariz y la boca con un pañuelo desechable al toser o estornudar y luego botarlo a la basura.
- Limpiar y desinfectar los objetos y las superficies que se tocan frecuentemente.

¿Qué debo hacer si he regresado recientemente de un viaje a un área con propagación en curso del COVID-19?

Si ha llegado de viaje proveniente de un área afectada, podrían indicarle que no salga de casa por hasta 2 semanas. Si presenta síntomas durante ese periodo (fiebre, tos, dificultad para respirar), consulte a un médico. Llame al consultorio de su proveedor de atención médica antes de ir y dígales sobre su viaje y sus síntomas. Ellos le darán instrucciones sobre cómo conseguir atención médica sin exponer a los demás a su enfermedad. Mientras esté enfermo, evite el contacto con otras personas, no salga y postergue cualquier viaje para reducir la posibilidad de propagar la enfermedad a los demás.

¿Hay alguna vacuna?

En la actualidad no existe una vacuna que proteja contra el COVID-19. La mejor manera de prevenir infecciones es tomar medidas preventivas cotidianas, como evitar el contacto cercano con personas enfermas y lavarse las manos con frecuencia.

¿Existe un tratamiento?

Evite el contacto cercano con las personas enfermas

No hay un tratamiento antiviral específico para el COVID-19. Las personas con el COVID-19 pueden buscar atención médica para ayudar a aliviar los síntomas.



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

CRIMINAL CASE STANDING ORDER RE: PROCEDURE FOR REVIEW OF DETENTION ORDERS IN LIGHT OF CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC Magistrate Judge Nat Cousins Effective March 16, 2020

I am issuing this criminal standing order on March 16, 2020, in response to the coronavirus pandemic. It applies to every open criminal case in which I have ordered a criminal defendant to be detained and that defendant is presently held in custody awaiting trial. Most detainees in this District are presently housed at Santa Rita Jail in Alameda County, California. Defendants detained by other judges are not covered by this standing order. A copy of this order will also be provided to the offices of the Federal Public Defender, the United States Attorney, the CJA attorney coordinator, U.S. Pretrial Services, and posted publicly on the Court's web page.

Under the Bail Reform Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3145(f)(2), a detention hearing may be reopened at any time before trial if the judicial officer finds that information exists that was not known to the movant at the time of the detention hearing and that has a material bearing on the issue whether there are conditions of release that will reasonably assure the appearance of such person as required and the safety of any other person and the community. Two of the detention or release factors (among others) to be considered by the judicial officer are (1) the person's "physical and mental condition" (3145(g)(3)(A)) and (2) the nature and seriousness of the danger to any person or the community that would be posed by the person's release (3145(g)(4)).

The Crime Victims' Rights Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3771, also provides crime victims the

statutory right to be reasonably protected from the accused, to reasonable notice of any public court proceeding involving the crime or release of the accused, the right to be reasonably heard and not excluded from public court proceedings, the right to be treated with fairness and respect, the right to confer with the attorney for the Government in the case, the right to proceedings free from unreasonable delay, and the right to be informed of the rights under the Act. The Court shall ensure the crime victim is afforded the rights described in the Act. 18 U.S.C. § 3771(b)(1).

This standing order sets forth the procedure for any request to reopen a detention hearing on the basis of the physical and mental condition of the accused. This public health crisis is serious and urgent. Counsel should not delay in evaluating whether any defendant should have his or her detention hearing reopened.

- 1. Counsel for the Government and accused must confer first in an effort to determine if they agree.
- 2. The Government must provide notice and an opportunity to confer and be reasonably heard to any crime victim.
 - 3. Any stipulation or motion to reopen must be filed in the ECF system.
- 4. The motion should state whether the defendant waives personal presence at the hearing.
- 5. Copies of the motion to reopen must be provided to Pretrial Services and to Clerk's Office Manager Snooki Puli at Snooki_Puli@cand.uscourts.gov. This may be by email.
- 6. Unless otherwise ordered, no hearing will be held in person. Counsel, clients, and crime victims will be allowed to participate by telephone or video to the extent practicable.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Date: March 16, 2020

Nathanael M. Cousins

United States Magistrate Judge