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Media Contact: Kim McCarl, 925-723-2939

Craneway Pavilion in Richmond to be Converted into a Federal Medical Station for COVID-19 Patients

As part of local emergency preparations, Contra Costa County officials are working with Federal and state partners to convert the Craneway Pavilion in Richmond into a 250-bed medical station for COVID-19 patients.

Beds and medical supplies are being brought in by the National Guard this week to begin transforming the Craneway Pavilion, a large event center on the Richmond waterfront, into a temporary medical facility. The goal is to have the facility ready to receive patients by the third week of April, when health experts predict the Bay Area will see COVID-19 cases begin to peak.

“This is one more step to be better prepared for the anticipated COVID-19 surge,” said Candace Andersen, Chair of the Board of Supervisors. “We are very grateful for the cooperation of so many private and public entities that are making their venues available to serve the health needs of our community in this unprecedented crisis.”

The federal medical station would serve as an alternate care site for COVID-19 patients who don’t need ICU-level care. It would be used only in the event local hospitals lack capacity to handle a surge of COVID-19 cases. While equipment and supplies are provided by the Federal Government, the County would coordinate medical staffing of the site.

“Dedicated County physicians, nurses and other professional staff will provide vital medical care in this historic building to help prevent our local hospitals from becoming overburdened by an expected surge in patients” said Supervisor John Gioia, who represents the area where this site is located.

The County is also establishing other alternate care sites, including using hotels for homeless residents.

Contra Costa and other Bay Area counties recently extended a regional stay-at-home order through May 3 hoping that continued social-distancing measures will reduce the impact of COVID-19 on area hospitals.

The site will be secured and not open to visitors.

Managed by the Division of Strategic National Stockpile, federal medical stations are rapidly deployable caches containing beds, supplies, and medicines which can quickly turn a preidentified building into a temporary medical shelter during a national emergency.

Richmond Mayor Tom Butt stated that “The Craneway played an essential part in winning World War II. Today it is being repurposed to fight another global war. This facility will help not only our local communities but contribute to the overall effort to contain COVID-19.”

The Craneway Pavilion, located in the Ford Building, was a Ford Auto Plant from 1928 to 1956 and switched to assembling jeeps, tanks and military vehicles during World War II.