**Minutes of the San Diego Refugee Forum Meeting**

**Date**: Tuesday, January 19, 2021

**Location**: Zoom meeting

**Time**: 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**Attendees:**

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| --- | --- |
| Abdi Abdillahi, SD County Refugee Coordinator  Afrah Abdulkader, IRC Survivor Advocate  Aidee Roman  Alexis Burnstan, UCSD TASET project  Ana Lozano, United Healthcare  Ann Vilmenay, COSD-HHSA-BHS-AOA  Anna Washington, SD County Behavioral Health  Awichu Akwanya, SDRF Chair, UW East Africa  Bob Walsh, SDRF Secretary  Bowa Tucker, Office of Refugee Resettlement  Brett Hall, CHIP Comm. Health Imprvmt Program  Brittney Ochira, National Conflict Resolution Cent  Carol Lewis, El Cajon Collaborative  Casey Myers, One Digital World  Carol Crisp, PCG  Chris Williams, Catholic Charities  Clint Carney, Survivors of Torture Intl  Cyrus Weigand, Alliance for African Assistance  Diane Landino, Office of Refugee Resettlement  Dilkhwaz Ahmed, License to Freedom  Elizabeth Jackson, A Better Life Together  Frantz St. Phat, The Voice of Refugees  Giselle Barajas, Jewish Family Service  Gloria Cruz, County Supervisor Lawson-Remer | Graciela Mendoza, Health care coordinator  J Amaro, PCG Central  Jamie Schroer Culbert, County Community Health Sv  Jane Hoey, Women's Empowerment Intl  Jessica Mier, Off. of Rep. Susan Jacobs  J Suryan  Lauren Kocher, CA Refugee Programs Bureau  Linda Hanna, SD County Off. Refugee Coord.  Lisa Bain, Project Concern International  Lora Cayanan, CHIP, Suicide Prevention  Lucy Jasso, San Diego Youth Services  Maria Horsley, United Way of San Diego  Mary Joy Cunningham, UCSD  Maureen Hartin, Volunteers in Medicine  Maya Shahar, County Community Health Services  Mejgan Afshan, SDRF Treasurer, Borderlands Eq  Michelle Ly, UPAC  Mu Aye, Karen Organization of San Diego  Nora David, County Community Health Services  Oren Robinson, Volunteer tech worker  Rita Shamoon, CALWORKS job developer  Ross Fackrell, SDRF Vice Chair, IRC  Sabawoon Iqbal, Refugee Programs Bureau |

Meeting facilitator: Awichu Akwanya, SDRF Chair

**1. Greetings and introduction of attendees**

**2. Introduction of new officers**

Awichu Akwanya, Chair

Ross Fackrell, Vice Chair

Mejgan Afshan, Treasurer

**3.** **Treasurer’s report** Ross Fackrell, Treasurer 2020

Continuing and new members may pay annual dues for membership in the Forum for the year 2021 at any time. The preferred method is to pay at the website, using Paypal. It is possible to pay by check, but we would rather avoid the logistics and contact involved in handling physical payments.

By being a member you:

- support the work of the Forum

- increase the visibility of your organization

- are eligible to chair a task force

- can vote in Forum elections

- may run for a Forum officer position

Membership dues:

$35 for individuals

$35 for small ECBOs (max. 10 employees)

$70 for agencies/organizations

You may pay at the link on the Forum membership web page at: <http://www.sdrefugeeforum.org/members.html>

**4. Task force updates**

The task forces (Advocacy, Employment, Health, Domestic Violence, Asylum, Refugee Day) have not been meeting over the last year due to the pandemic situation. The Forum will be working on a plan to get them running again.

**5. Resettlement update**  Abdi Abdillahi, County Refugee Coordinator

*San Diego County*:

For the month of December, the total number is 30; primary refugees 5; secondary refugees 0; asylee 0; Cuban/Haitians 17, Trafficking Victims 0; and SIVs 8.

Total for the year to date FFY 2021, the total number is 80; primary refugees 20 (25% of the total); secondary refugees 0; asylee 1 (1% of the total); Cuban/Haitians 35 (44% of the total), Trafficking Victims 0; and SIVs 24 (30% of the total).

*Nationally:*

As of December 31, 2020, the total refugees resettled is 998 (October 1 through December 31); for SIVs, the total number is 1,294 (October 1 through December 31), in which CA received 475 SIVs.

**6. Main presentation**

The COVID-19 Pandemic in San Diego

Presenter: Jennifer Tuteur, M.D., Deputy Assistant Medical Officer, County of San Diego

The presentation provided information on:

- Coronavirus disease

- transmission of the disease

- precautions and restrictions aimed at controlling the spread of the disease

- testing

- vaccination

Summary:

COVID-19

- The name: COrona Virus Disease 2019 = COVID-19

- Coronavirus is a common type of virus that can infect the nose, sinuses, and upper throat. Its symptoms are usually mild or moderate.

- COVID-19 is caused by a new type of coronavirus that can cause severe symptoms and even death.

Transmission

- People who have the disease can spread it to other people. The disease is mostly spread through close person-to-person contact – less than 6 feet distance for 15 or more minutes over 24 hours.

- Enclosed space and poor ventilation are conditions that facilitate spread.

- It may also be possible to pick up the disease by touching infected surfaces and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

- People who test positive for the disease should stay home and avoid contact with others.

- People who have been exposed to people who have the disease should stay at home (quarantine) for at least 10 days.

Testing

- A special test is needed to see if you have this disease.

- If you feel sick, tell your doctor. You should get the Coronavirus test.

- Testing can help control the spread of the COVID-19, because people will know if they have the disease and they can isolate themselves from others.

- Testing for COVID-19 is available at more than 50 sites throughout San Diego County. See the County testing website:

<https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/community_epidemiology/dc/2019-nCoV/testing.html>

- For people who don’t have a healthcare provider, the testing is free.

Precautions to reduce risk of infection

- Keep a distance of 6 feet from other people.

- Wear a mask over your nose and mouth.

- Wash your hands frequently if you go out in public.

- Avoid touching your face.

Restrictions

- The government places restrictions on people’s activities when there is a high number of COVID-19 cases in a community. It can include restrictions on gathering in groups; going to school; and visiting restaurants and certain types of businesses. This can be as strict as a “Stay Home” order.

- Currently San Diego is under a Stay Home order. Only workers in essential jobs should be going out.

- People can keep up with the latest restrictions (in many languages) at the County website: <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/community_epidemiology/dc/2019-nCoV/health-order.html>

- Also check for updates with community news sources and on local TV and radio news.

Vaccinations

- A vaccine against COVID-19 is now available in San Diego County. It will prevent you from getting the virus.

- Two shots are required, 3 to 4 weeks apart.

- The vaccine will not give you a positive COVID test result.

- The system for deciding on who will get the vaccine first is complicated, with various Phases: 1A; 1B Tier 1; 1B Tier 2; 1C; 2. For example:

- Phase 1A is healthcare workers and medical personnel

- Phase 1B is people age 75 and over, and people who do certain kinds of jobs where they might be exposed to the virus.

- The vaccination scheduling in San Diego can change within days, and it also depends on how much vaccine is available. It’s best to call your health care provider to find out when you will be able to get a vaccination, especially to ask about old people and people in jobs who might be exposed to the virus. Or call community agencies.

- There is no danger in getting the vaccine. Some people feel a little sick for a day or two, other people don’t have any problem.

- Convince people to get the vaccine. Spread scientific facts: 95% of people who got the vaccination didn’t get COVID. Some people who didn’t get the vaccine died from COVID; people who got the vaccine didn’t die.

-See coronavirus-sd.com/vaccine for the most up to date information on vaccines.

In refugee communities

- Statistics show that people living in lowest 25% of low economic areas (“health equity areas”) have a higher rate of infection than in higher economic areas.

- The County does outreach about COVID by reaching out to health care providers in those areas. They do one-on-one contact with clinicians and educate through County programs.

(NOTE: Also see the San Diego Refugee Forum website <http://www.sdrefugeeforum.org/>

COVID-19 Resources link at top of home page.)

**7. Community announcements**

1) Dilkhwaz Ahmed: License to Freedom

- She advises that older people using agency services should take care in sharing their personal information.

- LTF has gotten a new contract with the County for a funded case worker. They will start a mentoring program for youth age 15-21 in cooperation with the Majdal Center. Please refer youth in the US less than 5 years.

- LTF is also part of the San Diego Refugee Community Coalition working with COVID testing, vaccination, etc., and can provide sessions on this.

2) Michelle Ly of UPAC asked about agencies doing mental health training with refugee children. Awichu said that United Women of East Africa does this type of training.

3) Brittney Ochira of National Conflict Resolution Center would like referrals of new arrivals for a work readiness program. bochira@ncrconline.com for more info about the Refugee Work Readiness Exchange

4) Jamie Schroer Culbert, County Community Health Services, has COVID posters available in languages of refugees:

• COVID-19 Poster (Available in print, can be requested)o COVID-19 Poster | Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Haitian Creole, Karen, Korean, Pashto, Somali, Swahili, Tagalog, Vietnamese• Flu vs. COVID-19 (Available for download in many languages)o Flu vs. COVID-19 | Spanish, Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, Dari, Farsi, Haitian Creole, Karen, Korean, Pashto, Somali, Swahili, Tagalog, Tigrinya, Vietnamese Isolation and Quarantine Orders AND Guidance

available in many languages, including newly added AmharicIsolationIsolation of people with or likely to have COVID-19 (PDF)Amharic | Arabic | Chinese | Karen | Korean | Somali | Spanish | Tagalog | VietnameseHome Isolation Instructions for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)Amharic | Arabic | Chinese | Karen | Korean | Somali | Spanish | Tagalog | VietnameseQuarantineQuarantine of people exposed to COVID-19 (PDF)Amharic | Arabic | Chinese | Karen | Korean | Somali | Spanish | Tagalog | VietnameseHome Quarantine Guidance for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Close ContactsAmharic | Arabic | Chinese | Karen |Korean | Somali | Spanish | Tagalog | Vietnamese

The Links didn't copy, but the information in other languages can be found here <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/community_epidemiology/dc/2019-nCoV/materials.html>

5) Lisa Bain, Project Concern International, advises that the agency has a Healthy Start program that offers free childbirth education, postpartum and breastfeeding support, midwifery and doula care to Black and Black Immigrant populations. We offer services in English, Spanish, Somali, Haitian Creole, and French. If you are interested collaboration: lbain@pciglobal.org . To formally refer clients, you can use our online referral option, which is HIPAA compliant: https://bit.ly/2WBT9jC

6) Gloria Cruz, Office of County Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer contact info: (858) 289-9203 Gloria.CruzCardenas@sdcounty.ca.gov

**Adjournment**: Awichu Akwanya, Chair, 11:55 a.m.

**Next Meeting**: February 16, 2021

Minutes recorded by Bob Walsh, Secretary