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JAIL SHOWS VIDEOS URGING PEOPLE TO GET VACCINATED AGAINST COVID-19

ALAMEDA COUNTY, Calif. – A coalition of community leaders and organizers has [produced videos](#) designed to overcome skepticism and educate people incarcerated at Santa Rita County Jail about the importance of a COVID-19 vaccine to avoid severe disease, hospitalization, and possible death.

The coalition includes Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice, Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, Urban Peace Movement, Homies Empowerment Project, as well as the Alameda County Public Defender's Office and the Health Care Services Agency. The Sheriff's Office's inmate services division is showing the videos that were produced by Oakland/Bay Area photographer [Stephen Texeira](#).

Any person who comes through the jail can request a vaccine at no cost and regardless of immigration status.

“Our clients are understandably skeptical of the vaccines due to the oppression, racism and economic injustices that most of them have faced throughout their lives. These experiences make them suspicious of anyone trying to tell them to do something because ‘it’s good for you,’” said Alameda County Chief Public Defender Brendon Woods. “We’re hoping to push against that by showcasing real leaders with real credibility.”

Woods, one of two black chief defenders in California, is featured in the videos along with leaders from the other groups in the coalition. They each introduce themselves and their organization and several share personal stories of how the pandemic has affected them. The videos are in Spanish and English within the jail, and shorter, single segments will be distributed via social media.

“We’ve consistently prioritized our incarcerated clients ever since scientists developed and federal regulators authorized the vaccines for use,” Woods said. “Now we want to educate people who remain skeptical in order to get as many people vaccinated as possible and get this awful pandemic behind us.”

This is the second time the Public Defender's Office has helped to produce educational video content for the jail. Last year, it helped create a video educating people how they could register and vote in the November 2020 election.

You can view the video here: <https://youtu.be/e1YFJP7i8Sk>.

A word on language for media

Jails are not the same as prisons. Prisons are run by the state of California or the federal government and hold people who have been convicted of certain felonies. Jails, on the other hand, hold people in the following situations: 1) people who are accused of committing new crimes or otherwise violating the terms of court-ordered supervision, 2) people who have been sentenced to time in jail after misdemeanor or certain felony convictions, 3) people who have been sentenced to state prison and awaiting transportation there and 4) people held by other entities that rent space from the jail, such as the federal government.

The preferred term for someone locked in jail or prison is “incarcerated person.” Please try not to use “inmate” or “suspect.”