**Superior Court of California**

**COUNTY OF ALAMEDA**

Tara M. Desautels, Presiding Judge

Charles Smiley, Assistant Presiding Judge

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# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Saturday, March 14, 2020

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA: The Superior Court of Alameda County announces its plan to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

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On March 12, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order N-25-20 in further response to the spread of the Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19). Among other things, this Order mandates compliance with state and local public health officials as pertains to measures to control the spread of COVID-19. Subsequently, the Alameda County Public Health Department (Public Health) issued its Guidance for Mass Gatherings. The guidance recommends that all non-essential gatherings of more than 250 persons be cancelled or postponed.

On March 13, 2020, leadership of the Superior Court of Alameda County (Court) met with representatives of Alameda County's criminal justice community—including the District Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the Sheriff's Office, the Probation Department, and the Alameda County Bar Association—to discuss steps the Court and its partners could take to comply with the Governor's Executive Order and the guidance of Public Health while at the same time protecting the rights of everyone impacted by the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Systems.

In addition, the Court consulted with representatives of Public Health to ensure that the measures being considered by the Court for implementation would comport with Public Health's guidance and its efforts to control the further spread of COVID-19.

The Court's Judicial Executive Committee and Emergency Services Team then met in an emergency session. In light of Governor Newsom's Executive Order, President Trump's March 13, 2020 National Emergency Declaration, and the March 1, 2020, Public Health Emergency declared by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, the Court is taking specific preventative action with the unanimous approval of its Judicial Executive Committee.

Effective Monday, March 16, 2020, Alameda County Superior Court will adjust its court operations as follows:

- All civil jury trials currently set between Monday, March 16, and Friday, April 3, 2020, will be continued on a rolling basis for 8 weeks from the currently scheduled trial date.

- All unlawful detainer mandatory settlement conferences for jury trials and jury trials currently set between Monday, March 16, and Friday, April 3, 2020 will be continued on a rolling basis for 3 weeks from the currently scheduled trial date.

- All time-waived misdemeanor jury trials currently set between Monday, March 16, and Friday, April 3, 2020, will be continued on a rolling basis for 8 weeks from the currently scheduled trial date.

- All time-waived felony out-of-custody jury trials currently set between Monday, March 16, and Friday, April 3, 2020, will be continued on a rolling basis for 8 weeks from the currently scheduled trial date.

- All traffic "preset" hearings currently set between Monday, March 23, and Friday, April 3, 2020, will be continued on a rolling basis for 60 days from the currently scheduled hearing date.

- All time-waived traffic trials currently set between Monday, March 23, and Friday, April 3, 2020, will be continued on a rolling basis for 60 days from the currently scheduled trial date.

- Starting Monday, March 16, 2020, all traffic "walk in" appearances will be suspended through Friday, April 3, 2020. Parties in traffic matters may telephone the Clerk's Office to schedule a "preset" arraignment date. Any other citation appearance dates set during this period, or failures to appear, will be automatically extended to a date after April 3; parties will be noticed.

- New citation appearance dates in traffic matters will be set 6 months from the date listed on the citation. Any requests to address matters that require immediate attention, including requests to lift DMV driver's license holds, may be mailed to the Court and will be addressed remotely where possible.

- Family law bench officers will exercise their discretion in continuing non-emergency Request for Order hearings and Status Conferences currently set between Monday, March 16, and April 3, 2020.

- Family Court Services will suspend its Day-of-Court Mediation services, effective Monday, March 16, 2020, but will schedule telephonic mediation opportunities for litigants.

- The Court's Self-Help Centers will be closed for walk-in appointments, and all in-person Self-Help clinics will be suspended, effective Monday, March 16, 2020. A limited number

of Self-Help staff will be available in the Clerk's Office at the Hayward Hall of Justice to assist litigants who are directed to Self-Help by judicial officers.

- The Court will extend its Self-Help telephone hours to 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and will work to implement additional opportunities for the public to interact with Self-Help staff via live chat and remote video connection appointments Monday through Thursday mornings.

No-time-waiver criminal matters, restraining order hearings, emergency family law Requests for Order, and other case or calendar types and hearings not specifically listed above will continue to be heard as Court resources and health directives permit, but with the following modifications:

- Attorneys and litigants are strongly encouraged to file documents through Fax Filing (Civil, Probate, and Family) or E-Filing (Criminal and Juvenile).

- Attorneys and litigants are strongly encouraged to make court appearances telephonically or through CourtCall in all case types. For telephonic appearances, please refer to the Court's judicial directory and contact the department that your hearing is scheduled in. For CourtCall, please call (888) 882-6878.

- Subject to judicial discretion, the Court will liberally grant hearing continuances upon request and will be reducing calendar sizes and stagger the calling of different calendar types to minimize health and safety concerns.

- The Court will only summon jurors to a courthouse for "essential" trials as required by law. In those circumstances, jury panel sizes will be reduced, and trial calls will be staggered to reduce group sizes.

- The Court will continue to grant COVID-19 related deferrals. Prospective jurors may make such requests on-line through this link, by calling the Jury Office at 510-891-6031 [press Option #1], or by emailing jury@alameda.courts.ca.gov.

- Trials currently underway will continue as scheduled. However, sworn jurors may be asked to take health-appropriate measures such as sitting outside the jury box to encourage appropriate social distancing.

- The Court asks that, when entering a courtroom or jury assembly room, members of the public should keep at least one vacant seat between themselves and the next unfamiliar person.

- The Court further asks that members of the public allow space while waiting in lines, and that they not crowd elevators or other confined spaces. Court visitors may be asked to wait in hallways or outside courtrooms and courthouses to minimize gathering sizes in

closed areas. Please follow the accommodation, health, and safety directions of any Sheriff's Deputies, Court Attendants, or other Court Employees offering their assistance.

- As a reminder, those who are ill should stay home; the Court may ask members of the public who are exhibiting visible symptoms of illness such as coughing to leave.

The Court will continue to monitor this evolving situation and will make further operational adjustments as appropriate. Please check the Court's dedicated COVID-19 web page for ongoing COVID-19 updates and additional juror and remote appearance information.

The Court supports and agrees with the statement issued by California's Chief Justice, Hon. Tani G. Cantil-Sakuye, on March 13, 2020: "Although the extent of the pandemic is unknown at this time, California's courts will continue to do what they do best: balancing public safety and health while protecting liberty and due process." The Alameda County Superior Court will strive to maintain our essential functions and Constitutional obligations while working to minimize COVID-19-related risks. We appreciate the understanding, patience, and support of the public and our Court partners during these challenging times.