



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Tuesday, March 17, 2020

Contact: San Francisco Joint Information Center, 415-558-2712, dempres@sfgov.org

***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**MAYOR LONDON BREED ANNOUNCES EXPEDITED HIRING
OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS TO SUPPORT COVID-19
RESPONSE**

Under the new policy, the Department of Public Health can hire qualified, licensed nurses more quickly. DPH will host an invite-only hiring fair at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital this weekend.

San Francisco, CA — Mayor London N. Breed today announced a Declaration to expedite City hiring of employees that are necessary to respond to the COVID-19 local emergency. Mayor Breed’s Declaration temporarily waives provisions of Civil Service Commission Rules and provisions of the Charter regarding hiring, in order to ensure continuity of City operations in response to COVID-19. Critical City employees include nurses and other public health professionals.

This Declaration allows the Department of Public Health (DPH) to hire nurses and other front line health care workers more quickly, which will help the health care system in San Francisco respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Typically, the hiring process for nurses takes six months or more. This change allows the City to hire qualified, licensed nurses “on the spot,” rather than through the normal months-long process.

“Our health workers are on the front lines of this public health emergency and as the situation evolves, we need to make sure we have enough nurses available to care for people who need medical care,” said Mayor Breed. “We need to move swiftly to respond to the coronavirus, and one of the most important parts of that response is making sure we have enough nurses in our hospitals. I want to thank all the health care workers that have been working night and day to support our community, and we hope this new policy can relieve some of the pressure on our health care system.”

“I strongly support Mayor Breed’s Declaration to expedite the hiring of front line health care workers immediately,” said Supervisor Catherine Stefani. “Our nurses and health care professionals are the brave people who run toward danger when the rest of us are in crisis. Earlier this year, I held a hearing on hiring critical positions to make sure that San Francisco had the capacity to ensure the safety of our residents. As we confront this pandemic, it is more important than ever that our public health and safety infrastructure is up to the task.”

“Being fully staffed and prepared with critical front line nurses is one of the most critical aspects of dealing with this impending health crisis,” said Supervisor Ahsha Safai. “I’m proud to have worked with our nurses and their union, SEIU 1021 and our Department of Human Resources to



come up with an aggressive hiring plan in this time of need. We can't wait one more day to hire nurses."

Mayor Breed issued this Declaration under the powers of the Local Emergency she declared on February 25th. The Declaration will be in effect for 30 days, and can be extended by the Mayor for another 30 days through an Executive Order. If the Local Emergency declared by the Mayor is rescinded at any point, the Declaration will cease to be in effect.

DPH will host an invitation-only nurse hiring fair at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital this weekend, and will continue hosting hiring fairs until all vacancies are filled. The hiring fair is not open to the public. Under the most recent Public Health Order, prospective DPH employees will be allowed to leave their homes to attend the hiring fair because hiring more health care workers is considered an essential service. Fair attendance will be staggered to allow for social distancing.

DPH Human Resources has begun contacting candidates who have already applied and are qualified to see if they are still interested. If they are interested and pass the pre-employment screen, they will be issued a conditional offer letter of employment and invited to the fair to complete the onboarding process. At the hiring fair, background checks, including fingerprints and medical screenings, will be conducted. Qualified candidates may be able to start work the following week, pending clearances.

This expedited hiring builds upon human resources improvements already underway at DPH and speeds up the Department's plan to hire nurses in 45 days or fewer.

"Supporting and protecting our health care workforce is a top priority," said Dr. Grant Colfax, Director of Health. "They are courageously on the front lines, keeping our community healthy and safe every day. Today's action will allow us to bring on more nurses quickly, to be prepared to meet the demands of the coronavirus response, and to augment the workforce that is currently here and working round the clock. We must provide our nurses, and all health care workers, with the support, protection and supplies they need to respond to COVID-19."

"The role that nursing plays in keeping our communities healthy and safe is invaluable," said Micki Callahan, Human Resources Director. "This expedited hiring plan focuses on hiring competent, qualified, and compassionate Registered Nurses quickly to provide relief to a healthcare system that is in high demand as we navigate the impacts of the Coronavirus on our City."

COVID-19 has put significant pressure on healthcare systems around the world. San Francisco is moving proactively to hire more healthcare workers so that the City can best respond to COVID-19.

The Health Officer of the City and County of San Francisco has issued a [Public Health Order](#) requiring that residents stay in their homes, with few exceptions, through April 7, 2020. This order is designed to protect community health by slowing the spread of the virus that causes



COVID-19. These are systemic as well as individual changes that will make a difference in people's lives.

Even people engaged in the essential activities described in the order must practice the following to avoid getting sick and to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- Stay at least 6 feet away from other people when on essential outings such as grocery shopping, riding public transit to an essential job, or walking your dog.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Do not shake hands.
- Keep common spaces clean to help maintain a healthy environment for you and others. Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned regularly with disinfecting sprays, wipes or common household cleaning products.

Stay home altogether if you are sick, 60+ years of age, and/or have certain underlying health conditions. Make sure you have a supply of essential medications for your family. Plan for how you can care for a sick family member without getting sick yourself. Take care of each other and check in by phone with friends, family and neighbors that are vulnerable to serious illness or death if they get COVID-19.

There is no recommendation to wear masks at this time to prevent yourself from getting sick. If you are sick, first call your health care provider; if you must leave your home to seek medical treatment, you may wear a mask or similar personal protective equipment (PPE) to prevent spreading illness to others.

Find the answers to frequently asked questions about the order at [SF.gov/coronavirus](https://sf.gov/coronavirus).

Other Public Health Orders and recommendations from DPH can be found at sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus.asp. Mayoral declarations regarding COVID-19 can be found at sfmayor.org/mayoral-declarations-regarding-covid-19.

For more information, you can also call 311. For official updates, sign up for the City's alert service: text COVID19SF to 888-777.

###