



**LORNA A. ALKSNE**  
Presiding Judge

**The Superior Court**  
OF THE  
**State of California**  
SAN DIEGO

Mailing Address  
Post Office Box 122724  
San Diego, California 92112-2724

January 27, 2021

Wilma J. Wooten, M.D., M.P.H.  
Public Health Officer  
County of San Diego, Health and Human Services  
1700 Pacific Hwy, #311  
San Diego, CA 92101

**Re: Request for COVID Vaccination Prioritization**

Dear Dr. Wooten:

We are writing to you on behalf of the San Diego Superior Court, the Office of the District Attorney, and the Office of the Public Defender to request prioritization of COVID vaccinations for the employees of our agencies and the Judges of the Superior Court as supplies are received in San Diego County.

We understand that under the priority group process most recently in place in the State of California, District Attorney, Public Defender, and Superior Court Judges and employees were defined as “essential workers” and eligible for the vaccine in tier 1C. This priority is important given our critical roles in providing the forum for the resolution of legal matters and protection of families and communities in San Diego County. However, with the Governor’s most recent press release, where the focus will be on age rather than job description, many of our lawyers, employees, and judges will not be eligible until much later in the process than originally planned.

As you know, the pandemic has brought criminal jury trials to a halt. We began jury trials in the fall with our Plexiglas-equipped courtrooms, but the surge and the most recent “Stay at Home” order prevented us from continuing this effort. We only completed three trials. Now, with the “Stay at Home” order rescinded by Governor Newsom, we will again commence jury trials and bring more people into all of our courthouses throughout the county to begin addressing the significant criminal and civil case trial backlogs created by the operational limitations imposed by this pandemic.

Within our current operational limitations, the Superior Court only has a limited number of courtrooms for jury trials that allow for social distancing or that are equipped with the recommended Plexiglas barriers. However, if all employees, lawyers and judges were vaccinated, (approximately 3,000 people) we could use other courtrooms, expand our services and appropriate public access and resolve many more of our backlogged cases more expeditiously.

Wilma J. Wooten, M.D., M.P.H

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This last year has been a difficult experience for the entire San Diego community, but especially difficult for those members of our community in-custody waiting for the ability to have a jury trial.

We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



LORNA A. ALKSNE  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court



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SUMMER STEPHAN  
San Diego County District Attorney



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RANDY MIZE  
San Diego County Public Defender