

# HEFFERNAN MEMORIAL



## HEALTHCARE DISTRICT

JANUARY 22, 2021

Ms. Hurtado

**Subject:** EMAILS OF DECEMBER 28, 2020 AND DECEMBER 29, 2020

We write to you today as members of the Heffernan Memorial Healthcare District Board of Directors to express our deep concern in relation to the statements made by you in your emails dated December 28, 2020 and December 29, 2020.

The statements are highly disturbing as they are against the integrity of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director. We agree that they are insults to the work of the District and the Board. The Board of Directors and the Executive Director would not compromise the District's integrity.

These types of statements were not expected from the ex-mayor of Calexico and an eight year council woman. These statements malign the City of Calexico and the District community. The statements are full of meanness and bitterness and are factual wrong.

Heffernan has never chastised or ridiculed you for your comments concerning Dr. Vo and his medical clinic. Heffernan has provided every public information requested item that you asked for. You simply did not request information that you allegedly were not provided.

Dr. Vo was provided PPE that was provided by the County of Imperial. These included N95 masks and Visors. The District provided one face shield to Dr. Vo (\$35.00) and one box of 25 coveralls (\$140.00). The District loaned Dr. Vo 1 PAPR apparatus (\$1,500.00) which will be returned to the District.

The District has provided N35 masks, 3-ply masks, alcohol gel, Opti-Cide3, gloves and N35 masks to medical providers in Calexico (Dr. Ceja, Dr. Estrada and Dr. Tristan).

Your comments about Dr. Vo and newspaper accounts about his non-profit medical clinic are not germane to Heffernan.

The District never entered into agreement with Dr. Vo. The District did authorize an agreement to be entered into with a local medical provider. The District choose not to do so.

The District has spent the \$25,000.00 allocation on COVID-19 related expenses. All financial documents requested by you in your public records requests have been provided to you. The District does use a credit card for purchases.

The District cannot provide you with the tax filings of a private non profit corporation because they are confidential and the District does not have possession of these tax filings.

Your private conversations with Councilwoman Gloria Romo are private conversations.

Heffernan has provided funding and equipment to Calexico Fire and Calexico Police. Your allegations that Heffernan insulted Calexico's first responders at a special meeting of 12/23/20 are not true and are false. Heffernan did not have a meeting on 12/23/20 because it was cancelled. The City of Calexico had a meeting on 12/23/20. Heffernan is not responsible for comments made at a City of Calexico council meeting.

You request that LAFCO investigate Heffernan for PPE purchases and the funds granted to Dr. Vo. Heffernan will provide any information to LAFCO or any other person. Heffernan provides LAFCO and the public a list of all expenditures and checks paid on a monthly basis through the District's Treasurer's report.

Your comments about the City of Calexico COVID Task Force and Councilman Urena being a disappointment are not the concern of Heffernan. Councilman Urena lack of understanding of Heffernan's grant bidding process is not a Heffernan issue. Please address those concerns to the City Council of the City of Calexico.

Whether Councilwoman Romo should have been appointed to the City COVID Task Force should be addressed to the City Council of the City of Calexico. Whether Dr. Vo should have been appointed to the

City COVID Task Force is a question for the Calexico City Council not Heffernan. Whether Dr. Vo has a conflict of interest serving on the Calexico COVID Task Force is a matter for the Calexico City Council.

You must be aware of Heffernan's understanding with LAFCO that Heffernan may not fund any City of Calexico programs. Therefore, Heffernan could not fund Calexico's first responders in 2018 when their funding was scarce. Prior to the District's understanding with LAFCO, the District provided funding for Calexico Fire and Calexico Police for equipment, ambulances and medical first aid equipment. The District provided funding for continued operation of Fire Station 2 and for the continued employment of firefighters and paramedics. You must be aware of this funding.

Heffernan provided every clinic and doctor in the District with the opportunity to submit a request for proposal. Heffernan has all the minutes and financials of every meeting held by the Board of Directors.

Heffernan's Board of Directors determines policy for the District. You as a private citizen do not set District policy. You have the right to comment on the District's actions and policies. Please make comments that are factually correct. False facts and false allegations serve no purpose.

We look forward to your response on these vital issues of community interest.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gloria Grijalva".

Gloria Grijalva, President of the Board of Directors

On behalf of the Board and the Executive Director

**Subject:** FW: Recent email from M. Huerta

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Maritza Hurtado** <itsatxldy@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Dec 29, 2020 at 8:24 AM

Subject: Dr. Vo/Heffernan Board equipment donation

To: <stella.jimenez@asm.ca.gov>, <tomvirgen@gmail.com>, <jurgh@iclafco.com>, <complaint@mbc.ca.gov>

Good morning. As you are aware, I have had concerns which I have made public as to the lack of transparency with regard to the Heffernan Board donations for the crucial health needs we are not realizing from the board during this awful pandemic. I have hit a huge wall. I have been discriminated upon, chastised and ridiculed by the Heffernan Board because I have asked to understand donations between Dr. Vo and the Heffernan. I would like to ask for your help.

I would like to ask for transparency to the public with regard to the early donations (March 2020) with public funds to Dr. Vo's medical clinic in Calexico.

After months of asking I was also trying to save my business until I read the news report that a raid was conducted on his business and the underlying unanswered questions about the lack of transparency in the early fight against the virus still existed.

Early in the pandemic, The IV Press reported a story about Dr. Vo having a partner relationship with his new clinic in Calexico: I did not know that a private medical doctor could do that with public funds then I realized Dr. Vo was working under a Non Profit, Vo Neighborhood Medical Clinic.

Here is a quick history of public information available as to the activity with Vo:

**The Agenda item from March 18 Special meeting for Heffernan states:**

**6. DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION ITEMS:**

- a. Discussion and/or action: Authorize the purchase of respiratory protection equipment/system against airborne particulates in the amount not to exceed \$25,000.00.
- b. Discussion and/or action: Authorize the participation with a local medical provider for use of the respiratory protection equipment/system in conducting infectious viral diseases examinations.
- c. Discussion and/or action: Authorize the preparation of a written agreement and appropriate waivers for the use of the respiratory protection equipment/system with a local medical provider.
- d. Discussion and/or action on review, analysis or suspension of the grant funding by Heffernan Memorial due to the coronavirus outbreak and the State of California and CDCP guidelines of:
  1. City of Calexico's Senior Wellness Program (City of Calexico has suspended all City organized events and Recreation programming).
  2. Proactive program.
  3. Comite Civico monitoring program (CUSD has suspended classes for 30 days)
  4. Dr. Tristan's HW4K's program.
  5. County of Imperial seniors meal program (which appears not to be impacted by state wide guidelines).
  6. Any other programs funded by Heffernan Memorial.

**March 19 IV Press article states:** It unanimously approved the expenditure of up to \$25,000 to purchase several self contained breathing apparatus that local medical providers can use in response to the potential threat.

**March 26 IV Press article states:** The clinic's efforts have been praised by city officials and the Heffernan Memorial Healthcare District, which considers the medical center a strategic partner and has been providing PPE to its staff. The district is also in the process of obtaining self-contained breathing apparatus for use by Vo's clinic.

After the cancellation of the community health programs which Heffernan claimed was due to the programs "not meeting the mission of the board" and "were on overtime anyway". I was soon approached by program providers that were cancelled within the Item 6 Heffernan decision who contemplated legal action regarding the cancellations but opted not to due to business closures and limited financial resources for support. There was no support from Heffernan to transition these programs to Zoom platforms for continuation and to date the programs remain closed.

I asked for a meeting with LAFCO on May 5, 2020, wherein Tomas Virgen, District Manager of Heffernan Memorial Health Care district ensured Jurg Hueberger, Chair of the board of LAFCO that he was working on a large shipment of 3,000 masks from China. I am concerned that this shipment was never realized either and that these early promises could have made a difference to combat the out of control infection rate we have had in Calexico since day one as the highest in the county cities.

I asked through a Public Records Search recently for the purchases and expenditures from Heffernan from March to June 2020 and I found NO reporting of PPE purchases or expenditures related to Covid needs directed to the community and there is no public transparency that matches what is marketed in social media highlighting Heffernan's continued support for this particular clinic belonging to Dr. Vo. There is no formal partnership agreement found to have been formed with the non-profit either.

In a personal conversation with Gloria Romo, city council/former Heffernan board chair in August hoping that she would help explain the purchases and expenditures, she was unable to explain why the records did not show the activity but she indicated that a credit card account existed. I am disappointed that this information was not included in their response to my request for transparency.

I only seek transparency. Dr. Vo is a medical provider running a non-profit that is overflowing with patients which also provides sufficient resources that he must account for along with other providers that must adhere to public rules for they are highly regulated services. I ask for equal responsibility as to transparency to ensure that public funds are available for their intended purposes. I would like at this time to also request a copy of the 990 filed for his non-profit for the year 2019 which I could not find online.

I hope that you can help the community of Calexico to ensure that they understand how the Heffernan Memorial Health Care district has spent monies to directly impact our community crisis in an effective and fair manner providing all stakeholders fair treatment.

At this time, Dr. Vo is participating in a City of Calexico Covid Task Force which I am very concerned with as well to hear that he did not speak up when the task force shamed the City of Calexico staff and first responders for doing "more". I must remind you that the Heffernan Memorial Health Care District has not donated equipment to the City first responders and gave preference to Dr. Vo. It is concerning that Heffernan has all but severed ties with our first responders yet placed public blame in a Special meeting of December 23rd.

Christmas was ruined when a medical provider came to our city to tell our officers that early on they could have done more. Dr. Vo is a wealthy doctor with a partnership with Heffernan who holds 7 million in

resources. The firefighters of Calexico and the Police Department were publicly shamed and Dr. Vo cannot explain exactly how donations were funneled to his operation. It is a slap in the face while we deal with transactions that have no transparency with regard to public funds between Dr. Vo and the Heffernan board.

Please provide a clear history of income and expenses for the board as to the donations given to Dr. Vo of \$25,000 in the early and critical months of the pandemic and any other donations toward his non-profit organization.

Please be so kind as to provide the most recently filed 990 if you have access given that you are on the board of the non profit. If the 990 is not available for 2019, please provide evidence of receipt of the public donation from Heffernan to the Vo Neighborhood Medical non-profit clinic.

I thank you in advance for the continued support to the citizens of Calexico (the city with no hospital) to ensure transparency with our public funds during this pandemic for the 40,000 residents with confidence that everyone is treated fairly.

