

THE RICHMOND STANDARD

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Craneway Pavilion swiftly becomes 255-bed field medical station

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Members of the California Air National Guard help set up a 255-bed medical field hospital at the Craneway Pavilion in Richmond on Thursday, April 2, 2020. (Photo credit: Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia's Office)

By Mike Kinney

Thirty members of the 146th California Air National Guard arrived in Richmond Thursday to swiftly set up a 255-bed field medical station at the Craneway Pavilion.

The goal is to have the large pop-up medical facility ready to receive patients by the third week of April, when health experts predict the Bay Area will see COVID-19 cases begin to peak, according to the County. The medical facility's purpose is to take on patients who don't need intensive care in the event that a surge in COVID-19 cases overwhelm local hospitals. The hope, of course, is that residents' vigilance in social distancing during the shelter-in-place period will mean the Craneway facility won't be needed.

While the Air National Guard is finished setting up the Craneway medical center, the rest of the set up will be done by Contra Costa County Health Services, according to Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia. The county is establishing other alternate care sites, as well, including hotels for homeless residents.

"The Craneway Medical Center has been a great partnership between federal, state and county agencies," Gioia said. "The hospital beds and supplies were provided by the Federal Government, California Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinated the delivery, the California Air National Guard installed the beds and equipment, and county physicians, nurses and other professional staff will provide the care."

California Air National Guard members set up similar pop-up medical centers in Santa Clara County, Los Angeles, Coachella and San Mateo County. Air National Guard members are "always in a constant state of readiness to be able to respond and assist our state and local communities when they need us most," said Acting Wing Commander, Col. Keith Chikasawa, 146th Airlift Wing.

"I'm incredibly proud of all the work our Airman are doing across the State of California," he said. "They always rise to meet the mission requirements no matter what. They have such a tremendously positive attitude and are incredible Airman doing incredible things within our communities."

All photos and video in this piece are credited to Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia and Robert Rogers, District Coordinator for Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia.