

1 [Promoting Medical and Scientific Collaboration Between San Francisco and Cuba]

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3 **Resolution promoting medical and scientific collaboration between the City and County**  
4 **of San Francisco and Cuba to address the COVID-19 pandemic and urging the United**  
5 **States Congress to remove restrictions on collaboration by suspending economic and**  
6 **travel sanctions against Cuba.**

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8 WHEREAS, The United States has the highest number of COVID-19 cases and deaths  
9 in the world—3.3 million infected, with deaths exceeding 135,000; and

10 WHEREAS, U.S. deaths fall disproportionately on Black and Latinx communities and  
11 on elders, noting that although Detroit has only six percent of Cuba’s population, Detroit  
12 residents have suffered 18 times more deaths than Cubans; and

13 WHEREAS, In the face of this worldwide menace, now is the time for international  
14 cooperation and solidarity; and

15 WHEREAS, San Francisco is home to many prestigious medical institutions,  
16 organizations, and businesses, and is in a position to provide leadership to the rest of the  
17 country in medical research, treatment, and cooperation; and

18 WHEREAS, The country of Cuba has a long history of providing international medical  
19 aid to other countries with many of its medical personnel directly involved in the fight against  
20 COVID-19 as members of the specially trained Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade  
21 against Disasters and Serious Epidemics; and

22 WHEREAS, The Medical Brigade distinguished itself in the fight against the Ebola  
23 epidemic in West Africa and stepped forward to assist in many epidemics around the world,  
24 including dengue fever, HIV, swine flu, and hepatitis; and

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1           WHEREAS, Fifty countries have requested aid from the brigade, with over 2000 Cuban  
2 health workers currently serving in the battle against COVID-19 in more than 28 countries;  
3 and

4           WHEREAS, Cuba offers treatment regimens for patients and prevention protocols for  
5 health workers including its drug Interferon Alpha 2B Recombinant, now in standard use in  
6 China and Cuba; and

7           WHEREAS, Although more than 42 countries have expressed an interest in acquiring  
8 this pharmaceutical, the medication is not available in the United States due to increased  
9 restrictions against collaboration with Cuba; and

10           WHEREAS, Worldwide, some 80% of COVID-19 patients in critical condition are dying,  
11 by contrast, in Cuba, 80% in critical and serious condition are now being saved; and

12           WHEREAS, The recent reduction in deaths of severely ill COVID-19 patients in Cuba is  
13 largely attributed to two treatments, beginning in April, 2020, that appear to help calm the  
14 “cytokine storm,” a dangerous overresponse by the immune system; and

15           WHEREAS, There is precedent for collaborative initiatives between Cuba and other  
16 U.S. cities and states, as demonstrated by the City of Richmond, California and the City of  
17 Berkeley, which both unanimously passed a resolution supporting medical collaboration, and  
18 the Minnesota Legislature which has introduced a similar measure; and

19           WHEREAS, There have also been multi-year joint ventures between Cuba's Center for  
20 Molecular Immunology and Buffalo's Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in  
21 developing CIMAvax, the Cuban lung cancer vaccine, as well as a collaboration between  
22 medical personnel from Cuba and the University of Illinois on infant mortality in Chicago; and

23           WHEREAS, In 2015 the World Health Organization recognized Cuba's medical system  
24 as a worldwide leader in biotechnology, and Cuba has made significant contributions to the  
25 international medical field, including a drug that prevents 77% of diabetic amputations; and

1           WHEREAS, The U.S. blockade of Cuba has severely restricted collaboration on  
2 scientific and medical research; and

3           WHEREAS, The people of San Francisco and the world would benefit from Cuban  
4 biotechnical, medical, and public health expertise in combating the ongoing COVID-19  
5 pandemic; now, therefore, be it

6           RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors encourages the San  
7 Francisco Department of Public Health to explore collaborations with Cuba to jointly face the  
8 COVID-19 pandemic, including initiating knowledge transfer about Cuba’s highly successful  
9 public health prevention methods, methods for preventing infection of health workers, and  
10 innovative treatments now being used in China and elsewhere; and, be it

11          FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors supports the  
12 lifting of restrictions on the Cuban COVID-19 treatment Interferon Alfa 2b, opening a path for it  
13 to enter clinical trials; and, be it

14          FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors urges the U.S.  
15 Congress and the President to lift restrictions on access to Cuban medical expertise in  
16 order to more effectively combat the COVID-19 pandemic by suspending U.S. economic and  
17 travel sanctions against Cuba; and, be it

18          FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors calls on the  
19 federal government to cease ongoing measures that deter Cuba from importing medical  
20 equipment and medicines to confront COVID-19, and cease attempts to stop other countries  
21 from accepting Cuban medical brigades and assistance.

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