

1 [Urging the City to Expand the Vulnerable Population Definition]

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3 **Resolution urging the City and County of San Francisco to expand the definition of**
4 **vulnerable populations for services for people experiencing homelessness during the**
5 **COVID-19 crisis.**

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7 WHEREAS, As of the latest Point in Time Count, there were 8,035 people experiencing
8 homelessness in San Francisco, 64% or 5,180 of whom are unsheltered; and

9 WHEREAS, The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is a growing threat to the health
10 and safety of all San Franciscans; and

11 WHEREAS, On March 6, 2020, the San Francisco Health Officer issued a Declaration
12 of Local Health Emergency Regarding Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19), which was
13 preceded by a March 4, 2020, Proclamation of a State of Emergency issued by Governor
14 Gavin Newsom and a February 25, 2020, Proclamation by the Mayor Declaring the Existence
15 of a Local Emergency; and

16 WHEREAS, Shelter at Home is a core public health intervention that, along with
17 isolation of cases, quarantine of contacts, social distancing, and widespread testing, interrupt
18 the community spread of the novel coronavirus thereby reducing illness and severe disease,
19 reducing demands on the health care system, and reducing social and economic disruption
20 for in San Francisco; and

21 WHEREAS, According to the Interim Guidance on Unsheltered Homelessness from the
22 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, sleeping on the streets often does not provide
23 protection from the environment, adequate access to hygiene and sanitation facilities, or
24 connection to services and healthcare necessary to adequately comply with health orders;
25 and

1 WHEREAS, According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development,
2 “People experiencing homelessness often have a higher risk for exposure to communicable
3 diseases and have little access to health care systems and treatment in their communities;”
4 and

5 WHEREAS, According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, older adults
6 (65 years and older) and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions
7 are at higher risk for being hospitalized from COVID-19; and

8 WHEREAS, According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, risk of getting
9 severely ill from COVID-19 increases as you get older; in fact, 8 out of 10 COVID-19-related
10 deaths reported in the United States have been among adults aged 65 years and older; and

11 WHEREAS, According to the latest San Francisco Point in Time Count, 35% of those
12 experiencing homelessness in are over the age of 51 and 74% have one or more health
13 conditions; and

14 WHEREAS, According to a report from the San Francisco Department of Public Health
15 on homeless mortality, 275 people experiencing homelessness died in San Francisco in 2019;
16 the average age of people experiencing homelessness who died between 2016 and 2018
17 was 51, 30 years shorter than the life expectancy for the City’s general population; and

18 WHEREAS, At the March 17, 2020, Board of Supervisors meeting, the San Francisco
19 Health Officer Dr. Tomas Aragon stated that during the COVID-19 Pandemic: “From a
20 disease-transmission perspective, absolutely having your own room is the best;” and

21 WHEREAS, On April 14, 2020, our Board of Supervisors unanimously passed an
22 emergency ordinance to require the City to secure 8,250 private rooms, including 7,000 rooms
23 for people experiencing homelessness, by April 26, 2020; and

24 WHEREAS, As of July 7, 2020, an estimated 40,000 vacant hotel rooms in San
25 Francisco; the City is currently leasing 1,121 hotel rooms that remain unoccupied; and

1 WHEREAS, Currently the City has defined vulnerable populations for the purpose of
2 Shelter in Place hotel eligibility as “asymptomatic people experiencing homelessness who are
3 60 or older or have been diagnosed with a COVID-vulnerable;” and

4 WHEREAS, Since the Emergency Ordinance requiring the City to house homeless
5 persons in hotels requiring the City to house homeless persons in hotels was passed
6 unanimously by the Board of Supervisors, the departments responsible for housing homeless
7 people during the State of Emergency, including but not limited to the Emergency Operations
8 Center, the Human Services Agency, the Homelessness and Supportive Housing
9 Department, and the Department of Public Health, have limited eligibility for Shelter in Place
10 hotel rooms to homeless individuals who meet the definition of vulnerable, specifically, those
11 who 60 or older or have been diagnosed with a COVID-vulnerable condition; and

12 WHEREAS, The intake for the Homelessness Response System, which is the overall
13 system of programs and housing opportunities for adults experiencing homelessness, is
14 conducted through an assessment process administered by the Homeless Outreach Team,
15 qualified homeless service providers, and at Access Points where clients are entered in the
16 Adult Coordinated Entry System; the Department of Supportive Housing and Homelessness
17 currently does not know the age or health conditions of the majority of the unsheltered
18 estimated 5,180 people on the street because they have not been entered into the Adult
19 Coordinated Entry System; and

20 WHEREAS, Research on geriatric homelessness including but not limited to the UCSF
21 Center for Vulnerable Populations, University of Pennsylvania, New York University, Boston
22 University, University of California - Los Angeles, and the University of Delaware asserts that
23 older homeless adults have medical ages that far exceed their biological ages; unsheltered
24 individuals experience geriatric medical conditions such as cognitive decline and decreased
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1 mobility at rates that are on par with those among their housed counterparts who are 20 years
2 older; and

3 WHEREAS, According to data set forth in the Gerontologist, a leading publication on
4 geriatrics, people experiencing homelessness 50 years and older and housed adults 70 years
5 and older may have similar risks of severe illness due to COVID-19; now, therefore, be it

6 RESOLVED, That based on research showing unsheltered individuals experience
7 geriatric conditions at rates that are on par with housed individuals 20 years older, the Board
8 of Supervisors urges the City to expand its definition of “vulnerable person” to include those
9 who are 45 years of age or older for the purposes of hotel eligibility and any other COVID-19
10 related services currently limited to vulnerable populations; and, be it

11 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges the Mayor, Emergency Operations
12 Center, the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, the Human Services
13 Agency and the Department of Public Health to develop a plan and conduct outreach to
14 people experiencing homelessness to identify the number of clients who meet the lowered
15 age requirement, including directing the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) or other qualified
16 entities to assess and offer to register every unsheltered individual currently living on the
17 street in the Adult Coordinated Entry System and do intake for the Homelessness Response
18 System; and, be it

19 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges the San Francisco Human Services
20 Agency and Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to immediately begin
21 transporting older unsheltered people over the amended vulnerable age into Shelter in Place
22 hotel rooms; and, be it

23 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the Board, upon passage of this Resolution,
24 shall transmit copies of this Resolution to Mayor London N. Breed, and the Directors of the

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1 San Francisco Human Service Agency, Department of Public Health, and Department of
2 Homelessness and Supportive Housing.

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