



**Statement from Fourth District Supervisor V. Manuel Perez and
County Executive Officer Jeff Van Wagenen
January 14, 2026**

Since September 2025, Supervisor V. Manuel Perez, his colleagues on the Board of Supervisors, and several departments from the County of Riverside (County) have actively collaborated with your team at the Palo Verde Hospital (Hospital) to ensure the health safety net for the community is functioning and available to provide emergency medical care when needed. This collaboration has included several other entities, including the City of Blythe (City), the Governor's Office, the California Department of Public Health, the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), American Medical Response, the Desert Healthcare District, Desert Care Network, Eisenhower Health, Inland Empire Health Plan, La Paz Regional Hospital, and others. During this timeframe, the various stakeholders have provided financial and operational support to keep the Hospital's doors open, while noting significant governance, legal and fiscal challenges facing the Palo Verde Healthcare District (District), including the District's pending Chapter 9 bankruptcy and pending dissolution consideration by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO).

Last week these challenges became more dire when DHCS did not allow for the District's Voluntary Rate Range Intergovernmental Transfer, which resulted in a potential loss of \$9.9 million in revenue for the Hospital. The County understands that the City provided a bridge loan of \$330,000 to cover the Hospital's operating expenses for one week, contingent upon the District contracting with the County or a County-approved management team to assume the day-to-day management and operation of the Hospital.

With full consideration for the gravity of the situation facing the community, who are on the precipice of not having a functional hospital emergency department within 70 to 100 miles, the County is offering a solution for the immediate- and near-term to ensure residents have access to emergency medical services. For your consideration, the County proposes to assemble a stakeholder "strike force" led by the County to independently stabilize and manage only the Hospital's emergency department for approximately six months, assess current conditions and make recommendations for next steps. This could begin as soon as feasible.

In the meantime, the County realizes the dire financial distress of the Hospital worsens by the day, with the threat of imminent closure. To avoid this detrimental impact to the community, the County also proposes to provide a loan of approximately \$1 million to the Hospital's emergency department until such time as the District agrees to the proposal related to the County-led independent strike force. Regardless of any potential County involvement, the County is not accepting liability for the District, the Hospital, nor the debt. Those matters must still proceed through the legal process.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to hearing from you and, hopefully, working out the details.