



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 10/14/2025

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name: County Administrator's Office, Human Services

Staff Name and Phone Number: M. Christina Rivera, 707-565-2431, Angela Struckmann, 707-565-5800

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District: Countywide

Title:

Board of Supervisors Countywide Appointment and Reappointment to the First 5 Sonoma County Commission

Recommended Action:

Approve the following Countywide appointment and reappointment to the First 5 Sonoma County Commission representing the Board of Supervisors:

- A) The appointment of Erica Gutierrez for a two-year term beginning September 22, 2025 and ending on September 21, 2027.
- B) The reappointment of Vanessa DeSousa, MD for a two-year term beginning October 1, 2025 and ending on September 30, 2027.

Executive Summary:

The Board of Supervisors are responsible for appointments to over 75 boards, commissions, committees, and task forces. Vacancies and upcoming expiring appointments are posted on the County's list of boards, commissions, committees, and task forces website:

<https://sonoma-county.granicus.com/boards/w/808bd6e42edf8e0f>.

Rule 50 of the Board Rules of Procedures states that the Clerk of the Board shall convene staff to review prospective countywide appointments and make appointment recommendations to the Board. The current item recommends appointment of Erica Gutierrez to the First 5 Sonoma County Commission for the role of parent representative and reappointment of Vanessa DeSousa, MD, to the role of pediatric healthcare sector representative.

Discussion:

First 5 Sonoma County is a public agency focused on supporting the healthy development of children from prenatal age through age five. Funded by California's Proposition 10 tobacco tax and Measure I - Sonoma County Child Care & Children's Health Initiative, it invests in programs that promote early learning, family resilience, and child health. The agency partners with local organizations and provides grants to improve outcomes for young children and their families. Key initiatives include parenting support, early childhood education, and innovative programs like guaranteed income pilots for low-income families. Through strategic planning and community engagement, First 5 Sonoma County aims to give every child in Sonoma County a strong start in life.

Erica Gutierrez is a mother of six children and is an active community leader. She has spent the last two years

advocating for equitable education and meaningful family engagement through her roles as President of District English Learner Advisory Committee and member of the School Governance Council in the Healdsburg School District. She is currently a board member for Healdsburg Futuro/Heartizens and was recently accepted to Los Cien's BRIDGE Program, which is only the second cohort of this leadership development program designed to increase diverse representation in influential roles across Sonoma County. Ms. Gutierrez works closely with parents, educators, and administrators to support children's academic and social development. Her commitment aligns with First 5 Sonoma County's mission to promote early learning, empower families, and foster community collaboration to ensure children are ready for school and life.

On August 25, 2025, the First 5 Sonoma County Commission voted unanimously to recommend that the Board of Supervisors appoint Erica Gutierrez to the First 5 Sonoma County Commission to fill a parent representative seat. Her appointment is for a two-year term beginning September 22, 2025 and ending on September 21, 2027.

Dr. Vanessa DeSousa is a pediatrician with The Permanente Medical Group and is board-certified in pediatrics. She is the Assistant Chief of Pediatrics at the Kaiser Permanente Santa Rosa Medical Center and serves as the Chief of Professional Staff Quality. She moved to Santa Rosa after completing her medical residency at Tufts Medical Center in Boston. She was an elementary school teacher prior to becoming a physician and holds a master's degree in special education.

On September 22, 2025, the First 5 Sonoma County Commission voted unanimously to recommend that the Board of Supervisors reappoint Vanessa DeSousa, MD to the First 5 Sonoma County Commission to fill a pediatric healthcare sector seat. Her appointment is for a two-year term beginning October 1, 2025 and ending on September 30, 2027.

Strategic Plan:

Not applicable.

Prior Board Actions:

08-22-2023: Approved the appointment of Vanessa DeSousa, MD for a two-year term starting October 1, 2023 and ending September 30, 2025.

FISCAL SUMMARY**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

Not applicable.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

Not applicable.

Attachments:

1. Application for Erica Gutierrez
2. Applications not recommended for appointment

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

No on-file items.