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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

RALPH COLEMAN, et al.,  
Plaintiffs,  
v.  
GAVIN NEWSOM, et al.,  
Defendants.

No. 2:90-cv-0520 KJM DB P

ORDER

This matter is set for the second regular quarterly status conference of this year on July 17, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. For the reasons explained below, and good cause appearing, the parties will be directed to file, on or before July 15, 2020, briefing responsive to the following questions, identifying issues that will appear on the agenda for the status conference. The issues may frame the court’s consideration of how best to resume Program Guide enforcement, including but not limited to enforcement of its orders regarding compliance with defendants’ 2009 staffing plan, under the circumstances the state’s prisons are facing with the extremely troubling advance of the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Whether increased clustering of members of the plaintiff class, particularly at the Enhanced Outpatient Program (EOP) and higher levels of care, is a feasible option for achieving full and durable compliance with the Program Guide and

1 other remedial requirements of this action sooner rather than later, given that  
2 clustering could be expected to reduce the need for transfers within the prison  
3 system to achieve compliance. The briefing on this issue should include  
4 discussion of available clustering options and whether any of those options can  
5 be achieved during the COVID-19 pandemic through application of best  
6 practices defined by reputable public health authorities. In considering this  
7 issue, in addition to any other matter the parties may brief, they should address  
8 whether *Plata v. Brown*, 427 F.Supp.3d 1211 (N.D. Cal. 2013), serves as  
9 authority for the proposition that this court sitting as a single judge court may  
10 sua sponte enter an order directing defendants to submit a clustering plan and  
11 to order implementation of that plan at such time as best public health practices  
12 indicate it is safe to do so.

- 13 2. Whether defendants are or soon will be planning for additional voluntary  
14 releases or sentencing reforms that would reduce the size of the plaintiff class  
15 in sufficient numbers to achieve full and durable compliance with the Program  
16 Guide and other remedial requirements of this action sooner rather than later.  
17 If defendants are so planning, do they have a targeted occupancy rate for which  
18 they are aiming that will facilitate compliance concurrently with  
19 implementation of best practices in management of COVID-19.
- 20 3. If the answer to the second question above is no, and if Program Guide  
21 compliance cannot be achieved without a greater number of population  
22 reductions than currently planned, whether this court should sua sponte request  
23 the convening of a three-judge court to consider entry of a prisoner release  
24 order specifically directed to reduce the number of *Coleman* class members in  
25 the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. *See* 18 U.S.C.  
26 § 3626(a)(3)(D) (“ If the requirements under subparagraph (A) have been met,  
27 a Federal judge before whom a civil action with respect to prison conditions is  
28 pending who believes that a prison release order should be considered may sua

