

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

February 15, 2022

**Ensuring the LA County Pandemic Response and Recovery Meets the Need of Immunocompromised Individuals and People with Disabilities**

The latest surge has been especially alarming for people who are more susceptible to severe outcomes from COVID-19, including people who are immunocompromised and people with disabilities of all ages. People with disabilities and chronic illnesses have disproportionately higher rates of hospitalizations and death due to COVID-19. Community stakeholders from the disability community recently expressed extreme disappointment and frustration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) “dismissal and devaluation of people with disabilities” throughout the pandemic. As a best practice in Los Angeles County (County), the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) reviews new CDC guidance to check that adequate protections remain in place for higher risk populations. Even as cases are on a decline, the County must ensure that its public health resources and healthcare delivery systems meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations, including people with conditions that compromise their immune system and people with disabilities.

MOTION

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Early in the pandemic, the County's Commission on Disabilities, the Personal Assistance Services Council, and other disability community stakeholders advocated for more accessible vaccination sites with Access transportation lanes and mobile vaccination teams to assist homebound people of all ages. In response, the County's Workforce Development, Aging & Community Services (WDACS), Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), and DPH worked collectively to assist homebound people and people with disabilities. Examples of these collaborations include vaccine outreach to In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) workers and their clients; outreach to disabled and older adults that required home vaccinations; Access Services transportation lanes at mega vaccine sites; and prioritization of Quarantine and Isolation housing referrals for people with disabilities or other risk factors. Also, DPH worked with the Los Angeles City Fire Department and other local jurisdictions to create an expansive network of in-home vaccination teams that assist homebound residents. Recently, DPH's in-home vaccination program lost some of its partnering agencies, which resulted in response time delays. Even as the economy reopens and partner agencies return to their regular activities, the County must continue to ensure that services and resources for higher-risk populations are prioritized and improved upon.

People who are immunocompromised often find themselves in a terrifying position of navigating everyday activities like going to a grocery store, as well as determining whether to delay essential, lifesaving, crucial care, or becoming infected with COVID-19. In addition, they often face economic barriers to access delivery services for foods, medicines, and other essentials. Additionally, for people with disabilities there are barriers

to access personal protective equipment, such as face masks with see-through window panels for people who are deaf and hearing impaired who rely on lip reading for communication. Furthermore, COVID-19 tests are not accessible to the people with low vision. The County must take steps to first acknowledge these barriers that people of different abilities face and then work with stakeholders, partners, and the disability community to develop, implement, and sustain a support network of resources for all persons with disabilities.

**I, THEREFORE MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Instruct the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Department of Health Services (DHS) and Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), to consult regularly with the Commission on Disabilities, the Executive Director of Aging and Community Services and relevant community partners to ensure the County's pandemic response and recovery efforts are meeting the needs of people who are immunocompromised and people with disabilities;
2. Direct DPH to integrate strategies that assist people who are immunocompromised and people with disabilities, including access to rapid antigen, in-home vaccinations, appropriate personal protective equipment (e.g. face coverings with clear see-through windows), and COVID-19 educational materials in formats that accommodate people who are hard of hearing, deaf and low vision, and report back with a summary of actions in 120 days.
3. Direct DHS to improve access to Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing for people with disabilities, incorporate COVID-19 educational materials in formats that people who are hard of hearing, deaf and low vision into patient outreach

efforts, and report back with a summary of actions in 120 days.

**I, FURTHER MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors direct the Commission on Disabilities to work with the Executive Director of Aging and Community Services on the feasibility of creating a task force that would aim to review how the County's COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery can better meet the needs of individuals who are immunocompromised and people with disabilities. The Commission on Disabilities and the Executive Director of Aging and Community Services should include the appropriate County departments that would be involved in this task force, recommendations on the task force structure/organization, and the timeline in which a task force can convene and compile a report with recommendations. The first convening of the task force should occur within 180 days.

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