

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION  
March 14, 2019**

**APPROVED**

**COMMISSIONERS**

**Crystal D. Crawford, J.D., Chairperson \***  
 Patrick T. Dowling, M.D., M.P.H. **Vice-Chair \***  
 Kelly Colopy, M.P.P. \*  
 Alina Dorian, Ph.D. \*  
 Jean G. Champommier, Ph.D.\*

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH REPRESENTATIVES**

Dr. Barbara Ferrer, Director of Public Health \*  
 Dr. Muntu Davis, Health Officer \*\*

Gabriela Mendoza, Interim Liaison\*

**PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION ADVISOR**

Megan McClaire, Chief of Staff \*

**\*Present \*\*Excused \*\*\*Absent**

<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>DISCUSSION/FINDINGS</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATION/ACTION/ FOLLOW-UP</b>
<b><u>I. Call to Order</u></b>	<i>The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m. by Chair Crawford, at the Central Public Health Center.</i>	<i>Information only.</i>
<b><u>II. Announcements and Introductions</u></b>	<i>Introduction of Commissioners and guests was conducted.</i>	<i>Information only.</i>
<b><u>III. Public Health Report</u></b>	<p>Dr. Barbara Ferrer, Director of Public Health, and Ms. Megan McClaire, Chief of Staff, provided the Commission with the Public Health (PH) Report, and discussed Department of Public Health (DPH) activities since the last report on January 10, 2019.</p> <p><b>Public Health Proposes Tobacco Retail Policy and Ordinance Change to Protect Youth</b></p> <p>In a Board motion, authored by Supervisor Ridley-Thomas and Hahn, Public Health along with other County Departments were directed to examine potential ordinance and policies to address nuisance tobacco shops, as well as education and outreach strategies to curb tobacco use.</p> <p><b>Public Health Investigates a Cluster of Reported Hepatitis C Cases Who Received Care at a Local Clinic</b></p> <p>The Department of Public Health identified six acute cases of Hepatitis C from patients who were seen at the Westside Multispecialty Medical Group between January 2016 and December 2018. Public Health responded by</p>	

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sending approximately 500 letters to individuals who received care at this clinic with information about Hepatitis C and instructions on how to obtain free testing at Public Health clinics or obtain testing at private providers at their own expense.

**Public Health Warns of Possible Measles Exposure**

The Department of Public Health confirmed one case of measles in a person who traveled through LAX Airport while infectious on Thursday, February 21, 2019. Public Health received the details of this case on Thursday, March 7<sup>th</sup>. No current risk related to measles exists at LAX Airport at this time as the period of possible exposure has ended. DPH shared with the public the dates and times of a possible exposure and provided the public information on common symptoms and immunization services.

**Preventing Violence in California Data Brief 1: Overview of Homicide and Suicide Deaths in California**

In a new report released by the California Department of Public Health titled, "Preventing Violence in California Data Brief 1: Overview of Homicide and Suicide Deaths in California." LA County is shown to have accounted for 30% of all homicides in the State in 2017. The report also identifies the disproportionately of communities of color particularly African American males between the ages of 20 to 24 which are identified to be 13 times higher than the overall LA County rate. Additionally, the suicide rate in LA County in 2017, while lower than the rate statewide, was the highest in the county since 1999.

On February 19, 2019, LA County made a significant step to expand infrastructure to prevent violence when the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the establishment of a County Office of Violence Prevention situated within Public Health recognizes that violence is a significant public health issue that requires a multi-sector, prevention-oriented response.

**Healthy Design Workgroup Activities and 2019 Workplan**

Dr. Ferrer provided an annual report to the Board of Supervisors on the 2018 accomplishment of the Healthy Design Workgroup (HDW) and included a description of the group's work plan for 2019. Some of the major outcomes in 2018 are that Public Health and Public Works, in collaboration with the

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HDW, County agencies, and regional partners, developed a draft of the County Vision Zero Action Plan that will be finalized in June 2019.

The HDW workgroup submitted a proposal for affordable housing and assisting living grants and received approximately \$30M to support the establishment of over 300 affordable housing units in unincorporated areas.

The Department of Regional Planning, working with the Internal Service Department, finalized a draft equity tool that will support equity approaches in decision-making related to land use. Lastly, DPH was heavily involved with a tree planting program in the San Gabriel Valley, which worked with youth and young adults.

In 2019, HDW will continue to work in identifying community grant opportunities to support community engagement and find additional ways to encourage county employees to use transit, walk, or bike for work.

**Public Health Week**

DPH is proud to offer a series of events during Public Health Week (April 1-5, 2019) that focus on how we support community residents build healthy communities. The theme for the Public Health Week is "*Science and Action for Health*." Public Health week activities will highlight holistic efforts on CPR training, West Nile Virus, Air Quality Flag Program at Wilmington Park Elementary School and opening the Wellness Center at LAC USC. The Wellness Center is the first family resource center focus to provide support and services to families of people with substance use disorders.

**Lead Paint Abatement**

The SoCal gas settlement was approved by courts. \$25M will be used to fund a study in Aliso Canyon on the impact of the gas leak. \$5M will be used to remediate interior and exterior lead paint on houses in the Exide Community. DPH created a partnership with the Community Development Corporation to contract services.

**Title X**

The Board instructed County Counsel to join and/or file an amicus brief in support of the State of California in its lawsuit challenging the new Title X regulation; and instructed County Counsel to work with DPH to evaluate and make recommendations to the Board regarding the County's participation as amicus or plaintiff in the various other lawsuits concerning the Federal Government's disinvestment in the integral safety net provided by Title X's family planning program.

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<p><b><u>IV. Presentation: Communication and Public Affairs</u></b></p>	<p>Mr. Mario Perez, Director of Division of HIV and STD Programs, provided the Commission with a review of current STD Trends: A Focus on Reducing Disparities.</p> <p><b>PRESENTATION OVERVIEW</b></p> <p>The Division of HIV &amp; STD Programs is part of the Bureau of Disease Control in the Department of Public Health. DHSP manages the state, federal and local resources for HIV prevention, care, treatment and STD control.</p> <p>The presentation overviews were STD data and trends, STD programming in Los Angeles County which included: CDC PCHD Plan, enhanced STD Work Plan, Center for Health Equity Action Plan.</p> <p><b>REPORTED STD CASES, LAC, 2017</b></p> <p>In 2017, there were over 100,000 reported cases of STDs in Los Angeles County with over 65.9% Chlamydia, 26.4% Gonorrhea and 7.7% Syphilis. The increase in syphilis cases is an area of focus due to the scarce resources and health impacts.</p> <p><b>NUMBER OF FEMALE SYPHILIS CASES AND CONGENITAL CASES MATERNAL CHARACTERISTICS (CS CASES 2017)</b></p> <p>Early Syphilis Cases were presented by census tract, health district &amp; Service Planning Area (SPA). Mr. Perez noted that early syphilis is any case of primary, secondary or early linked syphilis. The Antelope Valley, Metro, South LA corridor and Long Beach are the geographic areas most impacted by syphilis.</p> <p>The number of reported cases of syphilis (all stages), gonorrhea, and chlamydia has increased over the last decade. Since 2000 – 2001, syphilis rates have rebounded and has continued to increase. Mr. Perez shared that for every congenital syphilis case there is a case review to identify preventive action opportunities. Common maternal characteristics in congenital syphilis cases are drug use during pregnancy and history of incarceration.</p> <p><b>MIRRORING HIV EFFORTS FOR A STRONG APPROACH TO STD CONTROL</b></p> <p>Mr. Perez shared that national guidance is key for setting priorities, best practices, and measures of success to HIV control. National guidance and measures of success highlight the importance of policy advocacy and</p>	
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community activism for enhancing services, improving access, and reducing disparities. Adequate and consistent funding streams for surveillance, disease investigation, screening, treatment, prevention and program improvements are also important.

**KEY CONTRIBUTING FACTORS**

As STD control capacity is eroding, federal STD funding has seen a 40% decrease in purchasing power since 2003. The targeted State and local resources are limited. Another contributing factor is the decline in condom use overall, especially among men who have sex with men (MSM). Smartphone technology is changing the way people access sexual partners. Also, many residents at risk for STDs are not appropriately screened or treated by their medical provider. Cases of congenital syphilis are due to increased syphilis among pregnant women who are more likely to delay or not access prenatal care.

**STRENGTHENING STD PREVENTION AND CONTROL FOR HEALTH DEPARTMENTS (STD PCHD) 2019-2023**

Mr. Perez shared recommendations for strengthening STD prevention and control to be as follows: surveillance, disease investigation and intervention, promotion of CDC recommendations, promotion of prevention and policy, and data use for program improvement.

The CDC requirements exceeds the \$3M DPH receives from the federal government. DPH has requested \$30M for a robust approach to STD prevention and control.

**STD CONTROL STRATEGY FOR LAC**

The STD Control Strategy for Los Angeles County is to increase community awareness and healthy decision making, early identification of cases through screening and testing of at-risk populations and interruption of disease transmission through treatment of cases and partners.

The STD focused initiatives are surveillance and community mobilization to ensure screening, diagnosis and treatment are more robust. The STD hotline provides medical consultation and provider education and technical assistance.

A DPH effort to STD control is to open 50 school wellbeing centers by Fall 2019 in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) schools and other districts. The wellbeing centers will offer two services related to wellness

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emotional wellbeing and sexual health. This is an initiative to work with young people and focus on sexual health.

**SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE WORKPLAN**

The plan includes 14 specific strategies organized across screening, treatment, awareness and policy. DPH in partnership with USC and the Office of Adolescent Health funded a program in South Los Angeles in LAUSD and Lynwood Unified School District to provide an evidence based sexual health curriculum designed to prevent teen pregnancy and STDs. The program developed a guide of clinics that are youth friendly.

**ESTIMATED COST FOR ROBUST STD PROGRAMMING IN LAC**

The estimated cost for a robust STD programming in Los Angeles County is: \$2.25M for conducting surveillance, \$2.5M for disease investigation and intervention, \$21M to provide CDC recommended screening, diagnosis, and treatment services, \$2M for promotion of STD prevention and policy, and \$2M to analyze and use data for program improvement. Given the multiple complex factors that contribute to our growing local STD epidemic, the estimated cost to support a more robust STD control effort is \$30M annually.

**WHAT CAUSES THE HEALTH INEQUITIES IN STDs**

Mr. Perez shared that the socioeconomic factors such as homelessness, substance use, provider practices, and individual behavior cause the health inequities in STDs. Some health inequities at the provider level are inadequate screening and testing, reluctance to offer expedited partner therapy and limited follow-up with sexual partners. At the individual level there is a decline in condom use.

There is a close connection with people suffering from substance abuse disorder and a raise in STDs. The DPH Division of Substance Abuse and Prevention Control is funding \$1M per year to increase capacity to support STD work efforts and develop language to require testing and treatment of people in residential treatment facilities.

**DHSP's RESPONSE TO INCREASING SYPHILIS RATES IN WOMEN**

Mr. Perez commented that DHSP's response to address the increasing syphilis rates in women are as follows: provider focused outreach and education, social marketing, addressing syphilis in vulnerable populations, and partnerships with MCAH, SPAC, and other DPH programs.

**PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION KIT**

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Mr. Perez briefly commented on the Public Health Action Kit which includes both patient and provider resources to LAC screening, staging and treatment recommendations.

**DEAR COLLEAGUE LETTER**

The colleague letter is another DHSP strategy to address the increasing syphilis rates in LA County. Mr. Perez noted that key messages for providers are to take a thorough sexual history, screen all women of child-bearing age, screen all pregnant women for syphilis during the first trimester or at their initial prenatal visit, and stage syphilis correctly to treat correctly.

**CONGENITAL SYPHILIS TRENDS AND INTERVENTIONS**

Mr. Perez shared that most women of child bearing age at risk for syphilis are not screened prior to pregnancy and delay or do not seek prenatal care. Another congenital syphilis trend is that some women are infected between the first trimester, delivery or are re-infected.

DHSP's recommendation for interventions are to increase syphilis screening for women (15-44 years) in Los Angeles County, increase engagement in prenatal care among women at elevated risk of syphilis, decrease the number of congenital syphilis cases due to lack of follow-up or repeat screening and lastly, recommend universal third trimester screening.

**SYPHILIS SCREENING AMOING MSM IN HIV CARE**

Mr. Perez noted that HIV-positive MSM continue to experience high rates of syphilis infection. Current STD and HIV clinical guidelines recommend screening HIV positive patients for syphilis annually or more frequently. The yield of identified sexual partners as partner of public health investigation remains low which impacts the full potential disease control.

**WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

Los Angeles County congenital syphilis prevention strategies are to increase disease investigation & core surveillance, local case review and strengthen the healthcare provider-public health partnership, collaborations, community engagement and media advocacy.

**QUESTIONS & COMMENTS**

Commissioner Dorian mentioned the importance of culture and education for sexual health and suggested a target message for each group to identify partners and commented on the importance of connecting with community groups.

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	<p>Commissioner Colopy commented on the launch of the Office of Violence Prevention and suggested to connect with community organizations for messaging and communication opportunities.</p> <p>Commissioner Dowling noted the lack of awareness and use of prep treatment on female sex workers.</p> <p>Mario highlighted DHSP is working on getting new data on prep-treatment to address gender, racial and age imbalance.</p> <p>Chair Crawford commented on the need for the sexual health and reproductive justice frameworks to address STDs disparities in women of color. Chair Crawford highlighted a firm named Rally that is leading the “upspoken women” campaign to increase public awareness for sexual health and wellness.</p> <p>Dr. Ferrer commented that community groups have many powerful messages for addressing STD disparities but often lack resources. DPH has a lot to learn on how to support community groups and balance resources.</p>	
<p><b><u>V.</u>    <i>New Business</i></b></p>	<p>SUNSET REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE BOARD</p> <p>The Public Health Commission will complete the Sunset Review Questionnaire by March 31, 2019.</p>	
<p><b><u>VI.</u>    <i>Unfinished Business</i></b></p>	<p>DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT TO THE BOARD (IN PROGRESS)</p> <p>The Public Health Commission will complete the Annual Report by March 31, 2019.</p>	



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<p><b><u>VII.</u>    <u>Public Comment</u></b></p>	<p>A member of the public asked if the wellness centers at the schools will have STD/STI testing.</p> <p>Dr. Ferrer shared that all 50 wellness centers will test for STD and STIs.</p> <p>A member of the public commented on the importance of comprehensive wellness.</p> <p>The Commission thanked the member of the public for the feedback.</p>	
<p><b><u>VIII.</u>    <u>Adjournment</u></b></p>	<p><b><i>MOTION: ADJOURN THE MEETING</i></b></p> <p><i>The PHC meeting adjourned approximately at 12:15 p.m.</i></p>	<p><i>Commission Chair Crawford called a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed with Commissioner Dowling and seconded by Commissioner Colopy. All in favor.</i></p>