

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION**

APPROVED

December 8, 2022

COMMISSIONERS

Alina Dorian, Ph.D., **Chairperson** *
Diego Rodrigues, LMFT, MA, **Vice-Chair** *
Crystal D. Crawford, J.D.*
Patrick T. Dowling, M.D., M.P.H.**
Kelly Colopy, M.P.P.*

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH REPRESENTATIVES

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

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION ADVISORS

Christina Vane-Perez, Chief of Staff **
Dawna Treece, PH Commission Liaison*
Judy Vasquez, Advisor to the Director*

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

TOPIC	DISCUSSION/FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATION/ACTION/FOLLOW-UP
<u>I.</u> <u>Call to Order</u>	<i>The meeting was called to order remotely at 10:30 a.m. by Chair Dorian</i>	<i>Information only.</i>
<u>II.</u> <u>Announcements and Introductions</u>	The Commissioners and DPH staff introduced themselves. November minutes	<i>Information only.</i> <i>Approved</i>
<u>III.</u> <u>Public Health Report</u>	Muntu Davis, MD, County Health Officer Monday, December 5, 2022, LAC welcomed the new 3 rd District Supervisor, Lindsay Horvath. Public Health look forward to working closely with supervisor Horvath and are extremely grateful for the dedication and partnership provided by Supervisor Sheila Kuehl during her years of service. Public Health celebrated our Giving Thanks event at Grand Park and would like to extend appreciation to Diego Rodrigues for joining the event. He was one of more than 600 DPH employees and allies in attendance. Public Health employee and partners' achievements in areas that reflects Public Health values of compassion, collaboration, innovation, equity ad leadership. Employees were able to enjoy entertainment from Ozomatli and great food. Trends for COVID-19, Flu and RSV	

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	<p>During the past week, an average of over 2,700 cases were reported per day. That is an increase of 85% from the seven-day average of nearly 1,500 cases reported per day since mid-November. As of December 7th, over 5,000 cases were reported, which is more than a 200% increase from 1,662 cases that was reported at the last meeting. Public Health has consistently messaged that if both hospital indicators and CDC community days are at or above high community level for 14 consecutive days, LAC will return to universal masking. Masking indoors remain one of the best tools and effective way to reduce COVID transmission and prevent another deadly surge. Some of the tools like medicines and preventive treatment are not as effective against some of the circulating variants found. This is a concern because if the variants continue to increase it will be more problematic.</p> <p>Recent data for LAC shows the Omicron BA5 is rapidly losing dominance while individually the BQ1 and BQ1.1 subvariants account for the second and third greatest number of sequence specimens. Combined the BQ family of variants makes up 38% of specimen surpassing BA5 at 36%.</p> <p>CDC estimated the week ending November 26th, BQ1 and BQ1.1 combined will account for more than 55% of sequence specimens nationwide and slightly higher in California.</p> <p>Flu and RSV that is circulating can cause a lot of illnesses and strain on the healthcare system, including clinics, emergency department and hospitals. Some of the hospitals are reporting wait times have increased from getting a person from the emergency department into a hospital bed. Flu and respiratory illnesses are tracked differently from COVID. Neither require mandatory reporting of individual cases. Instead, the specimens testing positive for flu and RSV are monitored. The clinical laboratories, that is part of the surveillance network, help keep track of these diseases across LAC.</p> <p>LAC is seeing very high levels of flu activity for this time of year. As of December 2nd, more than 30% of specimens tested positive for flu. Getting vaccinated for flu is very important. Public Health continues to message and promote folks to get their flu vaccines. Any case of influenza can be severe especially if it spreads to high-risk folks like older adults and young children. It is safe to get vaccinated for the flu</p>	

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	<p>and COVID at the same time. It has been established and recommended at the federal level.</p> <p>The most recent RSV season started at a much higher level than usual, like the flu. The RSV have peaked at 20% of specimens testing positive in early November and the percentage of RSV positive tests are declining. But this may be because more people are testing. LAC will keep watching for data. The current percent positivity while it appears to decline still surpasses the highest percent positivity values seen in previous seasons. So, many people are suffering due to COVID and other respiratory illnesses. The healthcare system is seeing the impact of high transmission of respiratory illness, not just with patients but with staff. As of December 2nd, visits for influenza like illness accounted for more than 15% of emergency department visits. Over 30% of the ED visits were among children zero to 17. LAC will continue to ensure vaccine availability and message the importance of masking and other preventive strategies for the holidays.</p>	
<u>IV. Presentation:</u>	<p>PRESENTATION OVERVIEW</p> <p>Andrea Welsing, Director of the Office of Domestic Violence, shares one of many projects under the program, Storytelling. Violence, Hope and Healing book.</p> <p>As a result of the allocation provided during supplemental budget, the unit has core ongoing funding and permanent funding of approximately \$12 million. The ongoing funding includes core infrastructure for OVP Trauma Prevention Initiative that funds street outreach and hospital-based violence intervention and community engagement and capacity building. It also includes funding for crisis response and family Assistance program.</p> <p>One time ARP funding and California Department of Public Health grant for the Violent Death Reporting System, close to \$40 million to invest in violence prevention and healing. Funding will help with local violence, mass shooting, and the day-to-day violence as gun violence has been increasing in LAC over the last couple of years.</p>	

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	<p>The core value for this office is centering the voices of survivors and those most impacted. The project helped to lay the foundation for survivor voice that are essential to commenting the devastating effect of violence in our communities.</p> <p>The background for the storytelling project, an application was submitted to the department of Arts and Culture to have a creative strategist artist in residence in the Office of Violence Prevention to think of innovative ways to look at how the work is done. It was a year in residency with an artist named Olga Koumoundouros. The program’s desire to center the voices of survivors and the lens of an artist with at Community Partnership Council meetings create way to foster the connection between county and community to lift those voices who were impacted.</p> <p>Two additional years were funded of having an artist in residence housed within OVP. This was specifically funded to advance the ideas of a storytelling project. This used art space and trauma informed storytelling techniques to collect the stories of LAC residents who have experience violence. This created new ways communication rather than our traditional ways of hosting or attending meetings.</p> <p>A lot of data, quantitative data about violence, firearm violence and Black sexual violence, violence in general. To add acumen context to the data, the program work on an open data portal to pair the stories collected with the data that were on the open data portal to give a fuller and more completed picture of violence in LAC. Another goal was to share and distribute information widely to inform efforts to prevent violence and to promote healing.</p> <p>The project was funded in 2020 just when COVID hit and the news of George Floyd. It really impacted the way the project was going to roll out. Doing in-person interviews was no longer permitted. There was a link on the program’s website that describe the project and allowed people to sign a consent form and record their voices and submit. However, the people overwhelming elected to interview with Olga. She took extensive time and care to reach out to individuals’ members and sat with them to record their stories, which were an hour to an hour and a half long.</p> <p>The program made sure the stories were collected across a diverse geography and demographics, types of stories told in terms of the</p>	

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	<p>types of violence. So, working with a lot of the community partners word of mouth was crucial. The stories were collected from 2020 to 2022. The program worked with community health councils, a contracted agency, who listened to all the stories and created the transcripts and then elevated and lift themes.</p> <p>The stories are archived and housed with the Office of Violence and Prevention as well as the original recording, transcripts, edits, and photos. Joannie Perez took beautiful black and white photos.</p> <p>Storytellers have access to their materials at any time because their stories belong to them. They each got their photo and edited copies of their story. The program has 100 personal narratives and 50 photographs of individuals who have experienced different types of violence across a diverse spectrum. A subset of 33 stories, along with photos, went into the book. On September 30, 2022, there was a book launch event where all the storytellers were invited to lift them up, acknowledge them and to share their stories and a panel discussion. The books were widely distributed to county and community partners as well as 86 LAC libraries.</p> <p>The program will continue to work with the Department of Arts and Culture to house all 100 narratives on the Arts and Culture and OVP websites. The book is also available on digital form and accessible to anyone.</p> <p>There is a complementary report that has been prepared by community health councils that shares their analysis and the major themes that are lifted, which will be finalized and, on the website, soon. LAC Libraries are willing to do programming around the storytelling project and has talked about dialogues and creating community events.</p> <p>Whether the stories are read all at once or in part, the reader will see the intersection between multiple types of violence. The stories offer compelling evidence about how racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia poverty, addiction and system failures have helped to perpetuate a culture of violence across communities and within our systems and how victims of violence get caught in the cycle and perpetrate violence as well.</p>	

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	<p>While the book illustrates a lot of the violence experienced and the cost of violence on communities and it show how it disproportionately impacts low-income communities and communities of color, it also shows violence is preventable and highlights how we can support prevention and healing.</p> <p>The program would like the Commission to think about funding to sustain and expand this project as this was created as a one-time funded. Although the program had one staff that worked with Department of Arts and Culture, there is no permanent built-in support that could build that bond of trust that resulted in the stories that is seen in the book. It requires a huge investment that program is not set up for. How could the program expand upon? How can we create additional dialogue, collect more stories? The program would like to collect stories from youth but cannot at the moment because there are many things to consider.</p> <p>Comm. Dorian: this was a thoughtful and creative project, and a lot of work went into it. It was a great idea to have an artist in resident. There is another subset that can be done, which is training on how to incorporate this in other programming. For example, as an Associate Dean at the Fielding School of Public Health UCLA, this can be seen as a workshop for public health practitioners to think about the strategy itself. Think about marketing, not just in California schools, but across the nation that teach about violence. This can be used as a textbook to pull information from. Looking through diverse scholarship in a way and pulling out information to teach and train. And having a speaker's bureau is a good idea and bringing the idea of equity and the stories need to be uplifted and compensated. There could possibly be UCLA events to place this into. Lastly, look into NPR for national marketing. Try to look outside LA County.</p> <p>Comm. Colopy: Powerful presentation that showed a lot of thoughtfulness. There is a preconceived notion of who engages in violence. Who is impacted, what it does, how it is like and how to be able to tell those stories to ground and humanize what happened to people and the long-term impact. It's important to think on how to take this back into the community. How to sit within our local jurisdictions and have the conversations of what's happening. For some, it's easy not to feel like it doesn't affect them too. It would be good to look at current work and to be able to speak in a local jurisdiction model.</p>	

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	<p>There is a new mayor and new folks who are engaging in these spaces. So, this would be a perfect time to bring this out as they are thing about future, their visions and how this can help support some of the work.</p> <p>Comm. Rodrigues: Excited about the applicability of the book and taking it into the community. There are two projects within DMH that touch on trauma-informed circles and green circles. This book can be a powerful tool in terms of conversation about life. There might be funding available. Explore the mini grants that DMH provides for community non-traditional healing activities. Also, until June 30, 2023, the Innovation Project is available. Storytelling is one of the major activities that TAM providers are tasked to carry out in the community. There should also be funding available to purchase books and for speakers. Reach out to the Department of Youth Development (DYD). Currently working with both DYD and Urban Peace Institute on just different trauma informed activities for youth groups. Lastly, DCFS' "I Can" project is for families in the system and have child abuse report and or case records. This book would be a great tool for the parenting groups for exploration and a model in general. There may be funding available through DCFS.</p> <p>Comm. Crawford: Contact the California Black Women's Health Project, which is has its Black women's mental health initiative and would be a great conduit to spread the word between trauma violence and mental and emotional health.</p>	
<u>V.</u> <u>New Business</u>	Election of 2023 Chair and Vice-Chair. There was a motion to nominate Comm. Diego Rodrigues as Chair and to nominate Comm. Crystal Crawford as Vice-Chair.	Vote: SD1 – Aye SD2 – Aye SD4 – Aye SD5 - Aye
<u>VI.</u> <u>Unfinished Business</u>	Bylaws: no changes or additions	

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<u>VII.</u> <u>Public Comment</u>		
<u>VIII.</u> <u>Adjournment</u>	<p>MOTION: ADJOURN THE MEETING</p> <p><i>The PHC meeting adjourned at approximately 11:50 a.m.</i></p>	<p><i>Commissioner Dorian called a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and was seconded by Commissioner Rodrigues. All in favor.</i></p>