

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION
September 14, 2023**

COMMISSIONERS

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

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH REPRESENTATIVES

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*

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

TOPIC		RECOMMENDATION/ ACTION/ FOLLOW-UP
<u>I. Call to Order</u>	The meeting was called to order at 10:33 a.m. by Chair Rodrigues	Information only.
<u>II. Announcements and Introductions</u>	The Commissioners and DPH staff introduced themselves. Action for May, July and August minutes	Information only. All approved
<u>III. Public Health Report</u>	Dr. Muntu Davis, County Health Officer DPH is happy to announce the appointment of Dr. Anish Mahajan the new Chief Deputy Director for Public Health effective October 2 nd . Dr. Mahajan was the Chief executive Officer and Chief Medical Officer at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. West Nile Virus On September 7 th , DPH reported the County’s first West Nile virus death of the year. It was a resident of the San Fernando Valley. LAC has experienced nineteen cases no including long Bleach and Pasadena, 16 hospitalizations due to West Nile virus. Humans can get the virus through the bite of an infected mosquito. Most mosquitos do not carry the virus so, people bitten by mosquitos are not exposed to West Nile. But those who do get West Nile virus may experience mild symptoms	Department Update

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	<p>including fever, muscle aches, and tiredness. In some cases, especially those over 50 years and older and those with chronic medical conditions, severe West Nile virus infection can occur and affect the brain and the spinal cord. There is no specific treatment for West Nile virus disease and no vaccine to prevent the infection. Residents should try to prevent them from getting infected, if possible. It's likely to see human infections throughout the rest of the summer and into the fall. DPH will continue to work with local vector control agencies and monitor West Nile virus infections since infected mosquitoes and dead birds have been identified across LAC.</p> <p>COVID-19</p> <p>There has been a gradual and consistent increase since the beginning of the summer. As of September 12th, a seven-day average of daily COVID cases of 558. That is a small decrease from the 569 that was reported in the previous week. This does not include Long Beach and Pasadena. Reported cases do not include home tests. So, the number is probably much higher.</p> <p>This past week, the daily average of 559 COVID hospitalizations per day. That is a 7% increase from the 523 reported the week prior. Although the numbers are increasing, they may level out. It is still fewer than the numbers we had during the 2022 summer peak. When the average was 1,287 each day. There is a seven-day average of 4 deaths, which is an increase from the 1.3 average deaths that was reported the week before. There may be an increase as we continue to see a higher number of hospitalizations. Usually if the hospitalizations increase, the number of deaths increases.</p> <p>With increased cases comes an increase in worksite outbreaks. Public Health is addressing 196 active COVID outbreaks. Most of these outbreaks are in healthcare and educational settings. DPH is providing technical assistance to each of these sites to ensure the outbreaks are mitigated swiftly and is taking all the preventive measures to both prevent and control further spread. DPH will continue to monitor outbreaks and all available COVID-19 data closely.</p> <p>For the two-week period ending August 5th, the variant EG.5</p>	

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	<p>was the most dominant strain in LAC. Accounting for just over 21% of sequence specimens. EG.5 is a descendant of Omicron XBB. It is still in the family of what is been circulating and this variant XBB strain is what the new updated 2023/2024 formula COVID vaccine that has been recently approved or authorized for this winter and fall will target. According to the California Department of Public Health in Southern California, which is comprised of 11 counties, EG.5 is the most common variant but the fastest growing proportion, and the WHO and CDC are also following a new subvariant, BA.2.86. The new strain has 35 new mutations on the spike protein compared to XBB1.5. Because of the large number of mutations BA.2.86, it may be more capable of causing infections in people who previously had COVID or received a COVID-19 vaccine.</p> <p>As COVID continues to spread, DPH wants everyone to continue to take precautions and common-sense actions. We will soon begin the respiratory virus season. The recommendations for COVID-19 are the same things that will help protect you from flu RSV and everything else that circulates during our winter season.</p> <p>Getting vaccinated, especially with the updated vaccine for COVID-19 is recommended. It is recommended for those who are six months and older to stay at home if you are sick and not to expose yourself to anyone. Get tested right away if you have symptoms or if you think you are sick. To prevent severe consequences, if you are infected, seek treatment early especially if you are at high risk. Wear high-quality masks that fit well over the nose and mouth and wash your hands. Some of the common everyday practices that we do in terms of washing hands are still things that are recommended. Public Health will continue to monitor local conditions carefully and will keep abreast of any changes.</p> <p>New Order</p> <p>Typically, every year there is an annual influenza vaccine or mask requirement for healthcare personnel. This year, we are releasing another order to it in place. With the order, there are a couple of changes. Typically, licensed hospitals, intermediate care facilities, and skilled nursing facilities as wems provider have this requirement to have their healthcare personnel</p>	

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	<p>vaccinated or wear masks during the virus season. This time, we're expanding it to all licensed healthcare facilities which will also include hospice, home health, and more. It also includes substance use disorder treatment sites, acute psychiatric hospitals, and dialysis centers. Workers must be vaccinated between November 1st and the end of April and if they are not vaccinated, they must wear a mask during patient care and in-patient care area. Two changes to the order include to expand all licensed facilities and the second requiring the COVID-19 vaccine for healthcare personnel as well. Vaccinate or mask. We want to protect our most vulnerable population as well as the workforce during this time. We do encourage unlicensed facilities that are not covered by the order given the principle of what the order is trying to get at also adopt similar requirements. It is effective November 1st, so facilities have time to get ready.</p> <p>Comments/Recommendations:</p> <p>Dowling: What are your recommendations for travelers? And will participate in the Bridge program. Will DPH do anything outside of the Bridge program?</p> <p>Davis: Same precautions are recommended, especially when traveling given how many people you interact with. As you go through your travels, keep the same recommendation in terms of travel make sure you get vaccinated before you go and wear your masks. The Bridge program will be implemented at our mobile clinics.</p> <p>More information can be found on the Public Health website: http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/coronavirus/</p>	
IV. <u>Presentation</u> :	Dr. Nichole Quick,	

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	Tracey Simmons, Emergency Preparedness Nurse	Tracy offered lifesaving support training on Hands-Only CPR (HOCPR) to the Commissioners and guests.
<u>V.</u> <u>New Business</u>		
<u>VI.</u> <u>Unfinished Business</u>		
<u>VII.</u> <u>Public Comment</u>	Susan stated her concerns about masking in healthcare settings. She advised her illness that precludes her from getting vaccinated. So, it was good when everyone was wearing masks in the healthcare setting. Now that all protocols and requirements have expired, doctors are not allowed to require or request anyone to wear a mask, which means she can no longer access safe healthcare. Public member pleads to bring back mask requirements. Heather echoes the previous caller. She called to urge masking for all healthcare professionals regardless of	

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	<p>vaccination status. Being vaccinated should not mean they do not have to mask. People should not get COVID from their doctors and other healthcare staff. Public member ask to bring back masks into healthcare regardless of vaccination status.</p> <p>Paul: calling for the Department of Public Health to reinstate the mask mandate in healthcare settings immediately. Public member mentioned his grandmother was infected with COVID when she went in for skin cancer treatment and was bedridden her treatment center had a mask-free policy. Public member urged to reinstate the mask mandate.</p> <p>William: Not everything worked with coronavirus mitigation. He would like to see published what worked and what didn't work on the website.</p> <p>Claudia: is a dietitian at a major healthcare institution in LA. She advised she works with MDs, PhDs and other Public Health professionals who misunderstand the mode of transmission despite COVID education received.</p> <p>Shannon: ask to bring mask back into the hospital setting.</p> <p>Greta: fails to see the reason why the mask requirements were rescinded</p> <p>Jacob:</p> <p>Ian:</p>	
<u>VIII. Adjournment</u>	<p>MOTION: ADJOURN THE MEETING</p> <p><i>The PHC meeting adjourned at approximately 11:30 am.</i></p>	<p><i>Commissioner Rodrigues called a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and was seconded by Commissioner Dorian.</i></p>