

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION  
March 13, 2025**

**APPROVED**

**COMMISSIONERS**

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

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH REPRESENTATIVES**

Dr. Barbara Ferrer, Director of Public Health \*\*  
Dr. Muntu Davis, County Health Officer\*  
Dr. Anish Mahajan, Chief Deputy Director\*\*

**PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION ADVISORS**

Christina Vane-Perez, Chief of Staff \*  
Jeremiah Garza, Advisor to the Chief Deputy Director\*\*  
Dawna Treece, PH Commission Liaison\*

***\*Present \*\*Not Present***

<b><i>TOPIC</i></b>		<b><i>RECOMMENDATION/ACTION/ FOLLOW-UP</i></b>
<b><u>I. Call to Order</u></b>	<i>The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m. by Commissioner Green</i>	<i>Information only.</i>
<b><u>II. Announcements and Introductions</u></b>	<p>The Commissioners and DPH staff introduced themselves.</p> <p>Land Acknowledgement</p> <p>Action for February Minutes</p>	<p><i>Information only.</i></p> <p><i>Read by Commissioner Green</i></p> <p><i>Approved</i></p>
<b><u>III. Emergency Circumstance</u></b>	Commissioner Dorian requested approval for emergency circumstance.	<i>A motion was called to approve. It was seconded by Commissioner Rodrigues. All in favor. – Approved.</i>
<b><u>IV. Public Health Report</u></b>	<p>Muntu Davis, County Health Officer provided public health updates.</p> <p><i>Fire Recovery</i> The ongoing fire recovery efforts continue with a focus on providing guidance and answering questions, particularly about debris removal and its disposal, including concerns about landfills. Collaboration with response agencies is ongoing to address these issues.</p> <p>Updates on air, water, and soil sampling efforts will be provided, with results from university, academic, and</p>	

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	<p>government partners shared on a website for easy access. Results are updated weekly as they become available.</p> <p>Soil sampling contracted by the Public Health Department is complete, but it will take a few weeks to receive results. Once available, a meeting will be held to discuss the findings.</p> <p>A potential town hall on the post-fire assessment plan may occur next week, though it is not confirmed yet.</p> <p><i>Respiratory Virus</i> Regarding respiratory viruses, there has been a noticeable decline in cases, particularly for influenza, which is consistently decreasing. COVID-19 and RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) have remained stable with no significant changes, which is a positive sign. While the situation is currently under control, there is cautious optimism that the winter respiratory virus season may be coming to an end soon. The hope is that these trends continue, and no unexpected developments will occur, keeping the situation manageable.</p> <p><i>Measles</i> A recent notable development occurred on the 11th, when a resident who had traveled internationally and passed through LAX was diagnosed with measles. Investigations are currently underway in response to this case. Unfortunately, the individual visited several locations, increasing the potential for exposure. Efforts are being made to work with these locations to disseminate appropriate messages and inform the public. In addition, healthcare providers are being alerted to ensure that individuals who may have been at risk of contracting measles at these sites are aware of the situation. They are being encouraged to get tested and vaccinated if they have not already received the measles vaccination, to prevent further spread of the disease.</p> <p>Recommendations/Comments:</p> <p>Rodrigues: Appreciates the department's work in convening the community and gathering feedback, particularly in response to the fires. Would like to know more about the collaboration between departments, specifically regarding the deployment of health workers for education, outreach, and engagement efforts and interested in whether emergency response operations are functioning well, especially in areas such as schools, and whether resources like respirators and</p>	

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	<p>other necessary support are being provided. Would like an update on how the department's efforts are being implemented and documented, and how these efforts can be further applied.</p> <p>Dr. Davis: In response to the fires, multiple departments are collaborating through workgroups and subcommittees focused on recovery efforts. Staff have been stationed at entry points to provide outreach, education, and respiratory protection for people reentering fire-affected areas. Resource centers continue to provide support, answering questions and offering guidance.</p> <p>In the field, staff are actively providing education, following-up on needs expressed in community assessments, and continuing outreach through direct calls and town halls. They are also engaging in various town hall meetings hosted by supervisors, cities, and community councils like the Altadena Town Council.</p> <p>The newly formed occupational and worker safety unit is working with Cal/OSHA and community partners to ensure safety for workers, such as day laborers and housekeepers, involved in fire debris cleanup. Cal/OSHA has issued updated worker safety guidelines, and the department is distributing fact sheets and continuing educational efforts for community groups involved in this work.</p> <p>Dorian: She emphasized the importance of showcasing the department's holistic response to the crisis, noting that it often feels like part of the department's regular operations, rather than a unique effort. She suggests creating an after-action report to evaluate the fire response against the department's original plans, which would provide valuable insights. She also highlights the significant resources involved in personal outreach, such as making follow-up calls to individuals who request assistance. She stressed the need to better capture and understand the resource investment in these efforts and to reflect on the overall response and the lessons learned for future improvements.</p> <p>Green: With the recent rain, has that had any delays or any kind of consequences to even further the devastation in those fires?</p> <p>Dr. Davis: it's good and bad. In some senses, sometimes the rain helps to clear out the air a little bit, but that just means</p>	

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	<p>that it then goes to the ground and then washes into the storm drains and into the ocean. So, there's some negative impacts that come from that.</p> <p>Sometimes when it comes to doing sampling, the rain will cause delays in terms of that. Staff are not able to do as good as sampling with rain until they have to delay and wait for the conditions to be clear. So, there's pluses and minuses with it, but there are protocols in place to adjust for that, usually when before the rains, especially because there's a lot of open land, so there's not a lot of stopping water from flowing, so lots of efforts by Public Works and others to make sure that there's not flooding and mudslides and so a lot of preparation before that as well.</p>	
<b><u>V. Presentation</u></b>	<p>Joshua Bobrowsky, Director of Government Affairs provided an overview of the State and Federal Budget updates.</p> <p>The Trump Administration has issued over 50 executive orders in its early months, more than any previous administration. These orders call for federal agencies to halt support or funding for initiatives related to vaguely defined terms such as gender ideology, environmental justice, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). While executive orders direct federal agencies to act in line with the President's priorities, they are not laws enacted by Congress and often include language like "to the maximum extent allowed by law," which creates uncertainty about their interpretation. As a result, federal agency actions based on these orders are likely to face legal challenges, and courts have already issued preliminary injunctions in some cases as these issues work their way through the court system.</p> <p>The department is continuing to review the impact of recent executive orders with county counsel and awaiting further guidance on potential operational effects or necessary adjustments. Despite these challenges, the department remains committed to providing services to all and moving forward.</p> <p>Regarding the White House Office of Management and Budget's directive to temporarily pause federal grants, loans,</p>	

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	<p>and other financial assistance, many public health-related grants were affected. This pause has been met with legal challenges, including lawsuits from 23 state attorneys general. Several courts have issued injunctions to halt this action, but the administration may still attempt to pause certain activities, suggesting ongoing reviews behind the scenes.</p> <p>While the memo was rescinded, the potential impact on public health funding remains concerning. The department has analyzed the threat to its programs, with up to \$1 billion potentially at risk from a \$1.7 billion budget. This shift away from federal support could have significant operational impacts on both the department and its community partners, affecting about 66% of its budget.</p> <p>Approximately 70% of the department's funding comes from state and federal sources, with 30% to 40% of state funds being pass-through dollars allocated to the local level. A significant portion of this funding is then passed on to community-based organizations contracted to support the department's work. Potential changes to these funding streams could have major impacts on local communities and services.</p> <p>Additionally, Robert Kennedy's appointment as Health and Human Services Secretary has raised concerns, particularly due to his comments on vaccine safety. There are questions regarding the federal approach to measles response, and the department is working to understand the guidance coming from federal authorities. Confirmation hearings for the NIH Director and the FDA Commissioner are ongoing, but Dr. Weldon's CDC nomination was recently withdrawn due to controversial comments about the debunked link between vaccines and autism. The department is also monitoring the nomination of Dr. Oz.</p> <p>The federal budget for Fiscal Year 2025 is still pending approval. The House recently approved a continuing resolution (CR) that maintains flat funding for non-defense spending and halts earmarks, extending through the remainder of the fiscal year. However, Democrats have raised concerns that it doesn't provide sufficient checks on the administration's actions. The CR is currently being debated in the Senate, and if an agreement isn't reached by the March 14th deadline, a partial government shutdown may</p>	

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	<p>occur, which could impact the department due to a lack of funding.</p> <p>The path forward for the Fiscal Year 2025 budget remains uncertain, and Congress is also behind on work for Fiscal Year 2026 appropriations. Some view flat funding as the best possible outcome, especially after proposals from Republicans that could have eliminated key programs, including those for HIV and academic funding, which would negatively affect services in LA County.</p> <p>Additionally, Republicans, with slim control in both the Senate and House, are using the budget reconciliation process to push through significant policy changes. This process allows legislation to pass with a simple majority, bypassing the 60-vote Senate filibuster threshold. The House has proposed a budget reconciliation package focusing on immigration, energy deregulation, and tax cuts. The Senate's approach is more modest and doesn't include tax cuts. The House plan includes \$4.5 trillion in tax breaks and \$2 trillion in spending cuts, with \$880 billion directed at the Energy and Commerce Committee, likely affecting entitlement programs like Medicaid. Proposals under consideration include reducing federal contributions to state Medicaid programs, eliminating subsidies for health insurance exchanges, and introducing work requirements that could reduce Medicaid enrollment without effectively encouraging employment. These changes could significantly impact access to care for vulnerable populations.</p> <p>The county has not yet taken a position on proposed Medicaid cuts, as it is waiting for more details from federal committees, though action is expected. At the state level, the legislature is reviewing the governor's preliminary budget for fiscal year 2025/2026. While the budget initially looked stable, the impact of recent fires could lead to increased economic pressure. LA County is advocating for funding focused on wildfire recovery, alongside other public health priorities. The county is particularly concerned about the future of public health infrastructure funding, especially the \$46.7 million received for critical positions and programs. Although there are no proposed cuts to this funding yet, there are concerns based on past budget proposals. Additionally, the county is working to secure continued funding for the myCAvax system, which manages vaccines and immunization programs. Without ongoing investment, the system may become unsustainable, potentially leading to</p>	

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	<p>inefficiency and additional costs for counties. The county is seeking \$44 million to maintain the system.</p> <p>The county is advocating for the extension of flexibility in the use of funds for the Child Disability Prevention Health Program (CDPHP) and the Health Care Program for Children in Foster Care (HCPCFC), which provide health services to vulnerable children in foster care. Last year, flexibility was granted for one year, but the county is working with partners to extend it further to maintain its staffing model, which includes over 70 public health nurses and physicians. Additionally, the county is addressing wildfire recovery needs, including staffing support and lease space for recovery resources, as well as funding for early childcare providers impacted by wildfires. Public health is also sponsoring two bills this year: the SDG Modernization Act, which seeks to modernize outdated policies for syringe services and addiction treatment, and AB 1129, which would allow local health officers to report birth anomalies, enabling better health planning and surveillance at the county level.</p> <p>Recommendations/comments:</p> <p>Crawford: Asked Joshua if he was aware of the Medicaid defense campaign led by the California Pan-Ethnic Health Network (C-Pan) and Health Access, which focuses on mobilizing constituents in key districts to prevent proposed Medicaid cuts. She mentioned a recent briefing on the campaign, highlighting the grassroots work being done. She is involved with C-Pan and has a history with Health Access and emphasizes the importance of raising awareness among constituents in these areas.</p> <p>Rodrigues: He appreciates the efforts around the services and supports outlined, particularly the continued funding for early childhood services (CDFS) as part of the 2025/2026 State budget priorities. However, he encourages the department and stakeholders to broaden their view of wildfire impacts beyond just geographic areas. He suggests considering early childhood service providers in adjacent regions affected by the wildfires, including those whose income or household dynamics were indirectly impacted, such as parents who didn't lose property but experienced income loss or had to support additional family members. This broader approach would help address the indirect impacts on both children and parents.</p>	

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	<p>Joshua Bobrowsky: The department agrees with the point that there is a critical gap in assistance for areas adjacent to burn zones, particularly for those who work in these areas. While assistance exists for those within the burn areas, it is limited for those in adjacent areas, including early childhood education providers, residents, and small businesses. Dr. Mahajan will address this issue next week, and the department plans to revisit the topic in future months as they gain more clarity on county positions and how to potentially gather support for these concerns.</p> <p>Dorian: She commends Joshua for his insightful contributions and leadership in addressing complex issues, particularly in public health. she acknowledges the challenges posed by executive orders affecting funding and community partnerships. She acknowledges growing anxiety about the future of public health careers, especially for new graduates, and stresses the importance of establishing priorities that will shape the field moving forward. She also appreciates the clarity provided on complex topics, noting the difficulty of explaining them herself. Lastly, she emphasizes the uncertainty in planning for public health, stressing the importance of contingency planning given the unknowns about future developments.</p> <p>Green: On the wildfire, is there even an imaginary window? Because there's a lot of needs and a lot of funding and a lot is complex. Is there a window that people need to make sure they get settled or is that ongoing as far as funding for support goes?</p> <p>Dr. Davis: Recommends the LA Recovers website as a valuable resource for information on deadlines and choices related to debris removal and other recovery tasks. While not fully versed in the details, he encourages spreading the word through communities to ensure people can access recovery centers and available resources. Additionally, he mentioned that Public Health will continue holding town halls, including recent ones focused on assessment plans and health impacts, to further inform the public.</p>	
<b><u>VI. New Business</u></b>		



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<b><u>VII. Unfinished Business</u></b>	2024 Public Health Commission Annual Report - Commissioners to review Draft next meeting	
<b><u>VIII. Public Comment</u></b>	C.L.: Student is seeking more detailed information about the state funding, specifically asking where it is coming from, whether the funds are already allocated, if they are based on an adjusted rate, and whether there is any surplus available.	
<b><u>IX. Adjournment</u></b>	<b>MOTION: ADJOURN THE MEETING</b>  <i>The PHC meeting adjourned at approximately 11:59 a.m.</i>	<i>Commissioner Green called a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and was seconded by Commissioner Rodrigues.</i>