



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
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PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSIONERS

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January 30, 2015

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PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION RESPONSE TO LOS ANGELES HEALTH AGENCY IMPLEMENTATION

Dear Supervisors,

The Public Health Commission appreciates the Board of Supervisors (Board) instructing the Interim Chief Executive Officer to include the input of the Los Angeles County Public Health and Mental Health Commissions regarding the proposed consolidation of the Departments of Health Services, Public Health, and Mental Health into a single integrated agency structure, as well as recommending that a stakeholder/public participation process is established.

Per County Code Section 3.54.080, the Public Health Commission's duties include: reviewing, studying, advising, and making recommendations to the Board relating to all public health matters within the County of Los Angeles. As Public Health Commissioners, we each represent a distinct Supervisorial District and have the responsibility to ensure that the community's input will be considered as the integrated Health Agency implementation process proceeds. In an effort to promote transparency and garner public trust, it is critical that we engage public health and mental health stakeholders in this process.

The Commission is committed to working collaboratively with the Mental Health Commission and Dr. Christina Ghaly, Director of Health Care Integration, CEO as we proceed with coordinating the public/stakeholder participation process. We appreciate the recommendations and proposal Dr. Ghaly has submitted for the initial steps in the development of a Los Angeles County Health Agency.

The Commission feels that since the Department of Public Health became a separate County department, it has been more successful and able to make great strides in population health. When Public Health was a component of the Department of Health Services, public health programs and services were adversely affected due to lack of resources and the inability to prioritize population health issues relative to personal health. Therefore, we have concerns about the agency proposal and would like to be assured that stakeholders have ample opportunity to provide input and be heard. As we move forward in engaging stakeholders, the Commission is submitting the attached Planning Principles, which we are recommending be adopted and incorporated as part of the integration planning process.

It is the Commission's intention that the Department of Public Health's mission, "to protect health, prevent disease, and promote health and well-being," remain a priority as the merit of integration of the three Departments into a single health agency is carefully considered.

Sincerely



Jean G. Champommier, PhD, Chairperson
Public Health Commissioner, First District

Attachment (Department of Public Health's Planning Principles)

- c: Larry Gasco, PhD, Chairman, Mental Health Commission
Christina R. Ghaly, MD, Director of Health Care Integration, CEO
Sachi Hamai, Interim Chief Executive Officer
Cynthia A. Harding, MPH, Interim Director, Department of Public Health
Mitchell H. Katz, MD, Director, Department of Health Services
Marvin J. Southard, DSW, Director, Department of Mental Health
DPH Executive Staff
Mental Health Commission

Principles to Guide Discussions around the Integration of DHS, DMH and DPH Services

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved in concept the integration of DHS, DMH, and DPH services under a single health agency. The planning and implementation of this action requires the use of core principles to guide a thoughtful discussion leading to decisions that will best serve the needs of the people of Los Angeles County.

DELIVERABLES TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. A structure for the "approved in concept" health agency model, uniting the Departments of Health Services (DHS), Mental Health (DMH), and Public Health (DPH) under a single combined LA County health agency,
2. Possible steps for implementing a health agency,
3. A timeframe for transition to the agency model,
4. The expected benefits and disadvantages of the agency model.

CORE PRINCIPLES

1. **Clarity of Purpose.** Clearly define objectives that will be achieved by changes in organizational structure or processes. Develop a plan and evaluate it to measure benefits and impacts to each department.
2. **Transparent Decision-Making.** Act with integrity and transparency in decision-making to build trust with employees and community stakeholders. Use a consensus-based approach whenever possible.
3. **Autonomy.** Each Department must be empowered to carry out its mission with appropriate authority to manage key matters, including priority setting, budget, operational planning, resource allocation, and equal access to the Board of Supervisors.
4. **Mutual Respect.** During the process of planning integrated services, act in ways that demonstrate respect for each Department's unique contributions to achieving shared goals.
5. **Synergistic Opportunities.** Identify synergistic opportunities for integration that will protect population, personal, and mental health, prevent disease and injury, and promote overall health and well-being for everyone in Los Angeles County.
6. **Safe and Open Communication.** Promote an environment to fully discuss the advantages and drawbacks to the proposed agency structure and commit to clearly articulating the process by which key decisions are being made.
7. **Essential and Legally Mandated Services.** Preserve and expand the programs and services that have the greatest impact on population health and elimination of health disparities, and promote health care access. Ensure that levels of resources, including dedicated funding streams, which are providing essential and/or legally mandated public health services, are continued in at least current levels in order to maintain access and quality.
8. **Sustained Leadership.** Ensure each Department retains a strong leadership team and the ongoing ability to attract and retain high-quality leaders who are capable of leading challenging initiatives in personal, mental and public health. Preserve a broad set of classifications and positions designated to assess, plan, implement and evaluate essential public health functions at multiple levels throughout each Department.
9. **Partnership and Collaboration.** Maintain and nurture existing key partnerships, both with internal County partners and external stakeholders and service providers, to pursue shared goals and outcomes. Each department has carefully cultivated community relationships that are unique and integration should not interrupt those partnerships but seek to leverage them for improved service delivery for everyone in Los Angeles County.
10. **Commitment to Efficiency.** Consider consolidating key planning, business, and administrative services only when such consolidation adds clear value and leads to meaningful savings and improvement in services, while assuring that access to these services is guaranteed for each Department at a level that is at least equal to what was available before the integration.
11. **Empowered Workforce.** Empower staff through approaches that support learning and growth, encourage innovations that facilitate change, and reward success. Promote cross-Department team-building.