

Los Angeles County Health Agency Operational FrameworkSeptember 29, 2015

The mission of the Los Angeles (LA) County Health Agency (“Agency”) is to improve the health and wellness of LA County residents through provision of integrated, comprehensive, culturally appropriate services, programs, and policies that promote healthy people living in healthy communities. This will be achieved through the aligned efforts of the Departments of Health Services, Mental Health, and Public Health (“Departments”) and in partnership with our clients and their families and communities, LA County residents, organized labor, faith-based organizations, community providers and agencies, health plans, academia, and other stakeholders.

In pursuing their missions, the Agency and Departments shall adhere to the following operational framework, abiding by key values of clarity of purpose, transparent decision-making, mutual respect, and open communication with those inside and outside the County.

1. **The Agency shall address Board-supported priorities relevant to health and well-being.** The Agency shall work to implement Board-supported priorities related to the health and well-being of LA County residents. The Agency shall guide the strategic, operational, and administrative alignment of activities, decisions, and external advocacy agendas within and among the three Departments in support of these aims and will include an explicit focus on change management practices that may support and reinforce necessary modifications of County practices/structures. The Agency shall publicly report on progress made toward achievement of specific goals related to these priorities.
2. **Departments shall maintain the full breadth of their mission and scope of activities.** Each Department has a critical mission in supporting the health and well-being of LA County residents; such missions should be maintained and supported in a way that respects each Department as equal partners in achieving the County’s health-related goals. Departments shall continue to establish Department-specific priorities distinct from Agency-level priorities and initiatives and shall lead and participate in a full spectrum and scope of activities consistent with these priorities. Departments shall continue to enter into external contracts, grant agreements, and operational agreements with external entities (e.g., community-based organizations, private providers, health plans) in a manner consistent with Agency priorities.
3. **Departments shall be supported in fulfilling all legal responsibilities and mandates.** Departments shall be empowered and supported in delivering essential and legally-mandated services and in fulfilling their mandate to administer cross-departmental oversight and auditing processes. The Agency and Departments shall develop protocols to eliminate any conflict of interest that may arise during the course of a Department carrying out its regulatory and auditing responsibilities.
4. **Departments shall maintain independent and direct relationships with the Board of Supervisors.** Each Department should be expected to directly and regularly communicate with Board members in private and in public regarding Department-specific issues and concerns related to the Agency.
5. **Department budgets shall remain separate.** The budgets of the three Departments shall remain as separate appropriations within the County and shall not be merged within a single Agency budget. Services, budgets, and staffing for Department activities shall not be cut and financing streams shall not be redirected because of a transition to the Agency model. Over time, Department activities, services, and programs may be altered, integrated, and/or realigned between or among the Departments if such moves would demonstrably benefit the populations served by the County, with internal and external stakeholder input, and with approval of the Board. Current grant-funded activities shall not be redirected. Departments’ risk management responsibilities shall be maintained separately; incidents of potential liability, claims, and lawsuits shall continue to be financially addressed by the relevant

Department. The Agency shall conduct strategic review of Department budgets to facilitate appropriate alignment with both Agency and Department-specific Board-supported priorities. Only the Board of Supervisors, pursuant to applicable laws and regulations, and not the Agency Director, has authority to change and/or reallocate Departments' appropriations and expenditures.

6. **The Agency shall support Departments in creating effective organizational structures.** The Agency Director shall interact with the Department Heads with the goal of creating organizational structures that meet the needs of Departmental and Agency mission, vision, and scope of work.
7. **The Agency shall avoid unnecessary bureaucratic processes.** The Agency shall operate in such a way as to ensure strategic alignment of operational and administrative activities within and between Departments in pursuit of Board-supported priorities. Bureaucratic processes that may unnecessarily extend Departmental tasks and operations (e.g., Agency-level signatures required for routine operations such as grant applications, supply chain purchases, and personnel action requests) shall not be implemented.
8. **Functions shall shift to being conducted and/or coordinated Agency-wide to the extent this enhances integration and/or when doing so is of strategic value to the County.** Agency-wide functions shall be implemented when doing so would produce a clear added value to clients, the Departments, and the County, taking into consideration the operational requirements of achieving specific priorities and administrative inefficiencies and/or redundancies. Regardless of placement, core administrative functions (e.g., information technology, service and managed care contracting, purchasing, finance, human resources) shall be planned, led, and executed in a manner that supports both Agency and Department priorities.
9. **The Agency shall lead labor-management partnership activities to reduce duplication and enhance the level of County partnership with organized labor.** Department leadership, or specific subject-matter experts, should be active participants in all relevant labor/management meetings and initiatives.
10. **The Agency shall respect current Department relationships and commitments.** Existing relationships and contracts with external entities shall be respected and maintained. Departments shall continue to maintain and nurture current internal and external partnerships in pursuit of Department-specific and shared Agency goals and efforts.
11. **Both the Agency and Departments shall maintain mechanisms to engage a broad set of internal and external stakeholders.** Department-specific mechanisms and forums for engaging County-employed workforce and external stakeholders shall be maintained and supported. The Agency shall establish complementary mechanisms to build transparent and meaningful partnerships with relevant stakeholders. The Agency shall proactively invite input from individuals and organizations with a variety of different perspectives and areas of expertise, including staff, clients/consumers/patients, and community-based organizations, in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programmatic and policy initiatives. The Agency shall transparently and clearly communicate with and report to the public on Agency activities and plans.
12. **The Agency shall embrace a full spectrum of services and programs aligned with the health and wellness needs of individuals across the life course and reflecting different social, cultural, and demographic groups.** Services and programs shall reflect an appropriate balance of clinical, recovery, community-based, and policy-related preventive and population health initiatives able to optimize health outcomes. Services and programs should be designed and implemented within the context of local communities, in a culturally competent manner, and utilizing evidence-based practices where feasible.
13. **The roles and responsibilities of Board-appointed Commissions shall remain unchanged.** The creation of the Agency does not alter the roles and responsibilities of existing County Commissions. Each

Commission should continue to advise Departments and the Board on issues related to their areas of interest and expertise. As is the current practice within Departments, Commission input shall be given significant weight and consideration in Agency decision-making.

14. **The Agency shall not alter or interfere with the duties and responsibilities of the County Health Officer.** Should a Health Officer Order impact any operations within the Agency, the Agency Director shall assure compliance to protect the health and safety of all residents.
15. **The Agency shall support public health emergency response activities and other time-limited, high-priority County preparedness initiatives.** The Agency shall respond to emergencies or crisis-level activities through development and implementation of effective plans, trainings and exercises to assure integrated service delivery and unified communication. Departments shall retain their respective roles, responsibilities, and legal authorities during emergencies.
16. **The Agency Director shall administer Department Head performance evaluations.** Department Head performance evaluations shall be drafted by the Agency Director for review and input by the County Chief Executive Officer. The Board of Supervisors shall maintain the ultimate authority over any individual Department Head's final performance evaluation and associated merit pay.