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June 14, 2016

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Cynthia A. Harding, M.P.H.
Interim Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cynthia A. Harding".

SUBJECT: **ADVANCED NOTIFICATION OF PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY ON A GRANT APPLICATION THAT MAY RESULT IN A POTENTIAL SOLE SOURCE CONTRACT**

This is to notify you that the Department of Public Health (DPH) has partnered with the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (SD-HHSA) to apply for a Sodium Reduction in Communities Program grant, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The grant application was submitted on March 14, 2016, and if awarded, DPH intends to return to the Board to request approval to execute a sole source contract with SD-HHSA to implement sodium reduction strategies within Southern California. The partnership with SD-HHSA strengthened the grant application by increasing the requested funding amount, building upon existing sodium reduction initiatives in the region, and allowing DPH to broaden the scope and impact of the interventions.

Background

Currently, DPH and SD-HHSA are the only two counties within California to receive grant funding to implement CDC's Sodium Reduction in Communities Program. On September 8, 2010, CDC awarded DPH \$1,090,098 (\$363,366 annually) for the Sodium Reduction in Communities Program grant to implement the Los Angeles County Sodium Reduction Initiative (LACSRI) program for the period of September 30, 2010 through September 29, 2013. The LACSRI program created healthier food environments by reducing sodium intake throughout Los Angeles County through the implementation of population-based sodium reduction strategies. The strategies included: 1) the development and implementation of a social marketing campaign to promote sodium reduction in the population; 2) development and implementation of venue-specific low-sodium food policies; and 3) evaluation of outcomes that resulted from the policy efforts.

On August 21, 2013, CDC awarded DPH \$722,946 (\$240,982 annually) for the second Sodium Reduction in Communities Program grant to support continued activities related to the LACSRI program for the period of September 30, 2013 through September 29, 2016. These funds allowed DPH to build upon the previous LACSRI demonstration program by leveraging existing partnerships, infrastructures, and lessons learned. The strategies included: 1) the facilitation and implementation of previously adopted efforts in healthy food procurement; and 2) modeling and expansion of efforts to additional venues in Los Angeles County, including City of Los Angeles agencies and other public and private venues (e.g., hospitals), to reduce sodium intake to limits recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

In 2014, CDC awarded SD-HHSA \$500,000 towards its first Sodium Reduction in Communities Program grant to implement Healthy Works: Sodium Reduction Initiative for the period of September 30, 2014 through September 29, 2016. This two-year initiative focused on increasing the number of healthy, low-sodium choices for meals sold in the County of San Diego worksite cafeterias and served to seniors, psychiatric hospital patients, juvenile and adult detainees, and children in foster care group homes.

On January 11, 2016, the CDC released the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) DP16-1607 for the new Sodium Reduction in Communities Program. DPH and SD-HHSA collaborated on a response to the FOA. On March 14, 2016, DPH submitted a grant proposal to the Sodium Reduction in Communities Program for \$2,500,000 (\$500,000 annually) for the period of September 30, 2016 to September 29, 2021, and named SD-HHSA as a partner for this five-year grant. Of this annual amount, roughly 20% will be provided directly to SD-HHSA through a sole source contract.

If awarded, this new partnership provides a number of advantages. Most notably, this partnership increases the availability of healthy foods across the region and allows for an expanded collection of health data to support interventions and evaluation of these strategies. The partnership also enables DPH to request an additional \$200,000 in funding, for a total amount of \$500,000 annually for the next five years, due to the projected expanded reach of the sodium reduction strategies. Without the partnership, DPH would receive \$1,500,000 in funding, \$300,000 annually.

Justification for the Grant Partnership

The partnership between DPH and SD-HHSA is required for successful implementation and execution of this grant. The FOA requires established partnerships and Letters of Commitment to be included in the grant proposal. SD-HHSA is the only other county within California awarded a Sodium Reduction in Communities Program grant during the previous funding cycle. SD-HHSA's past success brings a myriad of resources to the partnership, including developed staff expertise, infrastructure, program experience, and a network of community partners ready to meet the grant objectives in a timely and effective manner.

DPH and SD-HHSA have proposed to work concurrently within their jurisdictions to expand sodium reduction efforts in at least three new food venues: hospitals, learning institutions (e.g., universities and colleges), and senior meal programs. Within each venue, DPH and SD-HHSA will implement sodium reduction strategies to accelerate progress. These strategies include the development of food service guidelines, advancement of low sodium procurement practices, modification of menus or meals, enhancement of the selection of healthy foods, and educational outreach for patrons or clients of target venues. DPH and SD-HHSA will also work with food sector partners to promote low sodium foods within the supply chain. This will increase the availability of healthy, low sodium foods in these venues across Southern California. The partnership with SD-HHSA will help DPH increase the availability of healthy foods across the region. Additionally, the grant proposal submitted included specific combined program activities for both DPH and SD-HHSA and performance measures for the grant objectives. Without a partnership with SD-HHSA, these grant deliverables cannot be met.

Impact to DPH if Unable to Execute a Sole Source Contract

If DPH is unable to execute a sole source contract with SD-HHSA, DPH will forfeit the entire funding amount or experience a significant reduction in funding. Without SD-HHSA and a robust funding award, DPH's partnership with the food sector will be limited and implementation of the sodium reduction strategies will be more difficult to achieve. Further, losing grant funding for the entire five-year project period would result in the termination of LACSRI.

The proposed LACSRI project has the potential to affect 38 million meals per year at up to 17 food service entities throughout Southern California, impacting 1.6 million individuals. Over the past five years of implementation, LACSRI has made significant progress in reducing sodium consumption. For example, DPH has worked with the Chief Executive Office and their vendor to implement lower sodium snacks in approximately 325 vending machines across the County, resulting in the average sodium per packaged snack being reduced 30 percent. Additionally, DPH provided technical assistance to the Los Angeles Unified School District in 2010-12 on implementation of new school menus, which helped sodium levels decrease significantly for elementary breakfast and secondary breakfast and lunch.

In Los Angeles County, excessive sodium consumption continues to contribute to increased risk of developing cardiovascular disease, which increases health care costs. The LACSRI strategies are an important part of DPH's effort to address the risk of cardiovascular disease, including hypertension, heart disease, and stroke, in vulnerable populations. Given the impact of LACSRI, the DPH and SD-HHSA partnership is a critical component for the implementation of successful sodium reduction strategies in both counties.

Alternative Plan

While DPH could work directly with the target communities and entities located within our jurisdiction, the community relationships and expertise necessary to implement region-wide sodium reduction strategies would require extensive time, a significantly larger amount of funding, and other resources than what this grant program permits. In addition, if DPH cannot partner with SD-HHSA, the implementation of the sodium reduction strategies would be limited to Los Angeles County, making the grant deliverables difficult to achieve. DPH has proposed to work with SD-HHSA on regional and cross-venue strategies, including working with food distributors to encourage increased availability of lower sodium products for food venue owners. Los Angeles and San Diego Counties share similar large-scale food distributors and a partnership with SD-HHSA helps develop and sustain those food industry relationships. In the forthcoming grant cycle, the CDC requests and is expecting LACSRI to leverage existing resources and build upon established partnerships to expand the work of the Sodium Reduction in Communities Program. Without the partnership of SD-HHSA, start-up efforts would not align with the expectations set by the CDC.

Timeline

According to the funding opportunity announcement, CDC will provide a notice of award in September 2016. If awarded the grant, DPH will provide advance written notice in accordance with Board Policy 5.100, which states that County departments that intend to negotiate a sole source contract for Board approval must provide advance written notice to your Board at least four (4) weeks prior to commencing contract negotiations for new contracts. If no comments or objections are received, DPH will return to your Board to request authorization to execute the sole source contract with SD-HHSA, effective September 30, 2016 through September 29, 2021. To accept the award, DPH will notify the Board that we are exercising delegated authority approved in July 28, 2015, to accept grants and awards in an amount not to exceed \$500,000 per grant award, budget period, or annual term.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please let me know.

CAH:srp

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisor