

SYN. NO. \_\_\_\_\_

AGN. NO. \_\_\_\_\_

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR ZEV YAROSLAVSKY

February 3, 2004

**(Relates to Item #9 – REVISED MOTION)**

The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (DHS) conducted a federally funded study on HIV prevalence and risk behaviors among patrons of two bathhouses in Los Angeles County. As part of the Los Angeles Bathhouse Study, DHS staff surveyed bathhouse patrons on HIV risk behavior and conducted HIV/AIDS and STD testing of patrons. Results of the study show high-risk sexual behavior among bathhouse patrons who are primarily men who have sex with men (MSM), putting them at greater risk for infection of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. The study found HIV prevalence of 11% among the bathhouse patrons who were tested, which is higher than the HIV prevalence found in other HIV/AIDS testing sites. High-risk sexual behavior is also occurring at other venues that cater to MSM, such as sexual encounter clubs, which exist in various jurisdictions in the County. This suggests that there may be HIV/AIDS and other STD transmissions not only among patrons of bathhouses, but also among patrons of these other venues.

For the past two years, the Department of Health Services has contracted with

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community service providers to conduct HIV testing and counseling in bathhouses and other establishments and to appoint a liaison to collaborate with the owners and operators of these establishments on HIV and STD risk reduction efforts. Despite these efforts, the study's finding of 11% HIV prevalence in bathhouse patrons who were tested suggests that our HIV/AIDS and STD prevention and treatment efforts must be strengthened to address the environment in which high risk sexual behavior occurs.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Department of Health Services and County Counsel examine and report to the Board within 90 days on the operation of bathhouses and other venues in Los Angeles County at which high risk behavior occurs among MSM, including a review of the HIV/AIDS and STD prevention efforts within these establishments. The report should include recommendations on: appropriate changes in regulations and procedures related to bathhouses and similar venues; coordination between cities and the County in licensing and permitting the operation of such venues; financing, accessing, facilitating and permitting DHS' HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment efforts within these venues; and coordination of other healthcare services, such as STD testing and alcohol and drug treatment programs, with HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment efforts.