

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS KATHRYN BARGER AND  
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**Typhus Prevention and Response Plan**

Recently, there has been an increase in confirmed cases of typhus throughout Los Angeles County. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has identified an outbreak in Downtown Los Angeles which represents 9 out of the 59 cases that have been identified in the County this year. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has initiated an outbreak response to these cases with City of Los Angeles partner agencies. Separate from these cases, there have been additional cases identified in Pasadena and Long Beach. Both cities have independent health departments which track and respond to the cases in their respective cities.

Flea-borne typhus, also known as murine or endemic typhus, is transmitted to humans by fleas that are infected with two bacteria *Rickettsia typhi* and *R. felis*. The most frequent hosts of infected fleas are rats, cats, and opossums. The host animals do not become ill from the infected fleas, which makes it difficult to proactively identify host animals. Symptoms of flea-borne typhus among infected humans include high fever, chills, headache and rash. While typhus can be effectively treated with antibiotics, typhus infection can result in hospitalization and, in very rare cases, death. Primary preventive measures include avoiding contact with fleas, rodents, stray cats, opossums, keeping fleas off house pets, and keeping garbage containers tightly covered to reduce access to food for host animals around places of residence. The most important preventative measure is control of rats, cats, opossums.

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**MOTION**

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The City of Pasadena has been disproportionately impacted by the disease, as Pasadena Public Health has confirmed twenty cases of typhus since the beginning of 2018. The twenty cases in Pasadena overwhelmingly exceed the City's expected one to five cases annually. Separately, Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services has reported that there have been twelve cases of typhus since the beginning of 2018 in the City of Long Beach. This is double the number of Long Beach cases of typhus seen in past years.

When examining Los Angeles County Department of Public Health data, there has been an upward cyclical trend in annual typhus since 2009. To recap recent years, in 2016, there were 47 confirmed cases of typhus. The following year, 2017, reached 67 confirmed cases of typhus. This year so far, 2018 reached 59 confirmed cases of typhus, and the year is not over yet. These numbers exclude the Pasadena and Long Beach cases, as both cities have their own health departments.

The need for a coordinated typhus prevention and response plan is apparent. This issue calls for a collaborative multi-agency approach to this issue.

**WE, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health to work with the Pasadena and Long Beach Health Departments to develop a coordinated prevention and response plan to include the provision of culturally competent outreach and education to providers and at-risk individuals, communication with cities on the importance of their rodent control and trash collection activities, and provide additional recommendations and request additional resources if necessary, and report back in 45 days with a plan and the summary of outreach and engagement efforts.
2. Direct the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health to work with the Department of Animal Care and Control to seek flea collar donations that can be distributed to homeless individuals that have pets and report back in 60 days.