

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS SHEILA KUEHL AND
MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

November 20, 2018

Increasing County Efforts to Address Rising STD Rates

In response to the rising number of sexually transmitted diseases (STD) cases in Los Angeles County, on May 29, 2018 this Board unanimously adopted a motion, introduced by Supervisors Solis and Kuehl, asking the Department of Public Health (DPH) to report back on efforts designed to increase the resources that the County can leverage to address unmet STD testing and treatment needs. That report, received on September 7, 2018, noted that, although the County receives some funding from the State to support STD control efforts, the funding levels are not at all commensurate with the high level of STD cases that our residents experience. In fact, despite years of requests from the County to the State to increase the State’s funding for local STD control efforts, the State has only provided \$7 million in one-time funding increases for statewide use in the past decade. The report also noted that Federal funding for STD control efforts decreased by \$21 million nationally between 2003 and 2016. This equates to a 40% reduction in STD program purchasing power when adjusted for inflation.

MOTION

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| Solis | _____ |
| Ridley-Thomas | _____ |
| Hahn | _____ |
| Barger | _____ |
| Kuehl | _____ |

In the face of inadequate support from the State and Federal governments to support expanded STD control efforts, the County continues to look for additional funding sources to support vital STD services. Over the past several years, the Department of Public Health (Department) has supplemented the limited funding we receive from the State and Federal governments by covering an increasing amount of expenses associated with STD testing. Additionally, in response to the May 29, 2018 motion, the Department has also convened meetings with local health plans to discuss the development of policies that would allow for the reimbursement of STD-related services that are provided by public sector providers. The Department has also begun exploring how it might be able to bill Medi-Cal for STD-related services. While all of these efforts may play an important role in the development of a long-term financing strategy to support local STD control programming, it is clear that there is an acute need for additional services now.

The County must take a more pro-active role in combatting our rising STD rates. This Board can take a step towards demonstrating our continued commitment to addressing this crisis by allocating more County funds to expand STD control programming. These funds should be allocated in a manner that would allow the County to first and foremost maintain existing STD screening and treatment capacity in the publicly-funded service delivery system. Secondly, these funds should be used to expand the current publicly-funded service delivery system so that we can improve access to these vital services throughout the County, particularly for hard to reach, underserved populations.

The County and DPH must also continue to search for additional funding from those parties that share the responsibility for the health of our residents. Over the past

several weeks this Board has heard in a clear and loud voice from the Commission on HIV, concerned stakeholders, other local elected officials, and several contracted providers that they are deeply concerned about the lack of adequate resources for local STD prevention and control programming. This Board shares these same concerns and our County's advocacy efforts to generate increased State and Federal support for STD services will be more effective if we can coordinate our advocacy efforts with our engaged stakeholders. DPH must also continue to explore opportunities to leverage resources from private and public health insurance plans to cover the costs associated with the delivery of STD-related services in the publicly-funded service delivery system.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors take the following action:

- 1) Direct the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to allocate \$5 million from tobacco settlement funds set aside as obligated fund balance to implement items 1A and 1B over a 24-month period and to work with the Director of Public Health (DPH) to submit budget actions to the Board for their consideration that account for the increase in DPH's contractual obligations for these STD services in Fiscal Years (FY) 2018-19 through 2020-21, as needed:
 - a) Instruct the Director of the Department of Public Health to develop and release a solicitation within 45 days to support the delivery of STD screening and treatment services specifically targeting underserved geographic areas and sub-populations of the County. Additionally, delegate authority to the Director of the Department of Public Health, or her designee, to enter into contracts based upon the results of this solicitation, subject to review and approval by County Counsel, and

notification to the Board and the Chief Executive Office at least 15 days prior to contract execution; and

- b) Delegate authority to the Director of the Department of Public Health, or her designee, to amend existing contracts by up to 100% of current maximum contract amount to sustain existing services that we are not currently funding and to purchase additional STD screening and treatment services, subject to review and approval by County Counsel, and notification to the Board and the Chief Executive Office at least 15 days prior to contract execution.
- 2) Instruct the Director of the Department of Public Health to report back to this Board in 90 days on the Department's efforts to sustain and expand the publicly-supported STD service delivery system as outlined in directives 1a and 1b above. This report should also provide an update on the Department's progress in developing a mechanism to leverage Medi-Cal funding for the provision of these services; and
- 3) Instruct the Chief Executive Officer and the Director of the Department of Public Health to partner with local stakeholders in the development of a robust and proactive advocacy strategy designed to increase sustained funding for local STD control efforts from the State and Federal governments, and report back to this Board within 45 days on the proposed advocacy strategy.