

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR KATHRYN BARGER

March 4, 2020

Supporting a Funding Request from the Federal Government to Address Novel Coronavirus Threat

Since December 2019, more than 72,000 novel coronavirus (COVID-2019) cases have been confirmed globally, including nearly 1,900 deaths, predominantly in mainland China. To-date, only fifteen COVID-2019 cases have been confirmed in the U.S., including one diagnosed case in Los Angeles County in a traveler from Wuhan City, China. Although the health risk to the general public for COVID-2019 remains low in the U.S., due to the deteriorating situation in China, last month the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared a public health emergency to allow local, state, and federal officials to fully coordinate responses in partnership with public health departments, emergency management teams, airports, health care professionals, and first responders.

As one of the nation’s largest jurisdictions receiving travelers from affected countries, Los Angeles County is in the forefront to protect the public from this global health threat. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) continues to take steps to prevent the spread of the virus locally and subsequently across the nation.

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MOTION

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On January 27, 2020, DPH activated its emergency operations to coordinate response activities across Los Angeles County and to plan for additional imported cases and possible local transmission. This response requires enormous resources to support actions that include: ongoing coordination with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and federal partners, the State, and the Los Angeles International Airport to appropriately implement federal directives to quarantine high risk travelers and to monitor medium risk travelers from mainland China; training for health care providers and first responders; laboratory testing; providing personal protective equipment required for this newly emerging infectious disease; and, expansive community outreach and education efforts in multiple languages across Los Angeles County. DPH has established a screening call center to contact the more than 1,700 asymptomatic Los Angeles County residents who recently returned from China and offer support as they practice social distancing and are monitored for signs of respiratory illness.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has already expended considerable resources to prevent further spread of COVID-2019 in the U.S. Other costs are also being incurred by other County departments to maintain local preparedness and response efforts. Additional rapid and flexible funding from the federal government will be critical. The County is tracking its current costs and will submit them to Health and Human Services for Reimbursement.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Officer, through the Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations unit, send five-signature letters to the Los Angeles County Congressional Delegation and the White House Administration, including U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex M. Azar II and other officials, as appropriate, requesting at least \$7.5 million dollars to support the Department of Public Health, and additional resources to support other county departments handling local response activities to address the COVID-2019 threat; and that any Federal funds provided not be transferred from other existing programs to avoid compromising other important public health efforts.

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