

Delivering Vaccines To Underserved And Hardest-Hit Communities

On March 4, 2021, California Governor Gavin Newsom announced that State officials plan to reserve 40 percent of COVID-19 vaccine supplies for underserved communities. Given the disproportionate impact that this pandemic has had on Latinx and Black residents in the County and the continued disparities in vaccination rates experienced by Black and Latinx residents, this is a laudable goal that if properly implemented can have a direct and meaningful impact on those communities that have been hit the hardest. However, any stated goal can be rendered meaningless without the proper implementation plan, and it is critical that this process remain transparent and effective for County residents.

When examining current vaccination rates by cities and communities, it is clear that many of our neighborhoods with Black and Latinx residents, as well as those where our essential workers reside, are struggling to access the vaccine at the rates of more affluent neighborhoods in the County. For example, in Southeast Los Angeles, the cities of Cudahy, Bell, and Huntington Park alone are all below 40%, with Cudahy having a

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startlingly low 32% of its eligible elderly population receiving one dose of the vaccine. As a region, Southeast LA has only roughly vaccinated approximately 40% of its eligible residents, compared to other areas in the County, many of which have vaccinated in the high 40s to even over 60 percent of its eligible residents. A disparity can be found in many regions throughout the County, including Pacoima, the San Fernando Valley, and Antelope Valley, where large numbers of Black and Latinx residents reside and are being vaccinated at lower rates.

Although this is unfortunate, it is also not unexpected. Southeast Los Angeles, like many highly impacted communities throughout the County, lacks the medical facilities that typically administers the vaccine, and is populated with essential workers who simply cannot take the necessary time off work to access the larger vaccination points of distribution (PODs). It is imperative that they be prioritized for vaccine allocations, and the Governor's announcement can help augment County efforts in that regard.

Additionally, if the vaccine reaches the targeted population, it not only makes progress towards health equity, it also carries enormous economic benefits. In order to safely re-open businesses safely and ensure they remain open; workplaces must not become areas of increased transmission. By vaccinating the essential employees who work at said businesses, we are creating a safer environment for workers and customers alike to enter, reducing potential areas for potential outbreaks, and allowing businesses to operate.

Although the State's goal is a welcome one, to ensure a robust health and economic recovery, the details regarding the County's implementation of the plan are

critical. They must also be transparent, in order to ensure trust and compliance from the County's residents and allows these vaccines to reach their intended targets.

Additionally, the data source the State will utilize for this distribution, the Healthy Places Index (HPI) does not adequately report on the race, ethnicity, exposure risk, ability, language, or other relevant characteristics of Los Angeles County residents that fully capture the disparate impacts felt by communities throughout the County. It is essential that the Department of Public Health work with the State to employ more accurate metrics and utilize this vaccine allocation to reach those communities that need it most.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors to:

1. Direct the Department of Public Health to deliver a written report to this Board within 14 days that contains a plan detailing how the Department of Public Health will adhere to the State's requirement for 40 percent of allocated vaccines to be delivered to underserved communities across the County.
2. Direct the Department of Public Health to detail any plans to utilize more accurate and equitable metrics to augment the Healthy Places Index (HPI) measurement utilized by the State for vaccine delivery to these communities, and guarantees from the State that these criteria will meet the requirements for this allocation.

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