AGN. NO.

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS AND JANICE HAHN

December 7, 2021

Health Care for Contracted Employees

Los Angeles County has relied on a subcontracted workforce of over 2,000 security, janitorial, environmental and food service workers to keep critical services like County-run hospitals, clinics, and juvenile halls running throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. As County hospitals reached, then exceeded, intensive care capacity, these workers risked possible COVID-19 infection to clean patient rooms, prepare and serve patient meals, enforce social distancing and secure County facilities.

Despite their essential role in maintaining the County’s safety net services, many of these frontline workers are compensated below the industry standard and many are not afforded standard benefits like adequate paid time off and affordable employer-paid healthcare. Low standards for County contracted workers bring down standards across these already low wage service industries, exacerbating high rates of job turnover and housing insecurity among the majority Black and Brown workforce.

There is no more critical time for these workers to have health care insurance.
than it is now during a global pandemic, most especially those working in our County hospitals and clinics. With the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), it is likely that some of these frontline workers and their dependents would qualify for heavily subsidized insurance available in the State’s health insurance exchange, or Medi-Cal but may not be aware of these benefits available to them. Additionally, many of these workers are not eligible for government-subsidized healthcare because they have opted out of plans offered by their employers which are technically compliant with the ACA Employer Mandate but not practically affordable, especially for those workers with dependents to support. Whether enrolling in plans they can’t afford through their employers, purchasing unsubsidized health insurance out of their own pocket, or going without insurance altogether, many of these frontline workers struggle without affordable coverage despite their critical role in servicing the County’s health facilities in the midst of a pandemic. Additionally, they deserve to take time off such as when they are sick without having to give up their hourly wages.

The County has an interest in the services provided by these subcontracted workers given that their work is critical to the security, safety and day-to-day operations of County facilities. To ensure the health and safety of these contracted employees, the County should explore the feasibility that its contractors provide information on the health care insurance benefits available to them under the ACA and/or Medi-Cal and provide health care insurance for these employees that serve in County facilities if they are unable to avail themselves of other available health insurance benefits.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Office (CEO) along with the Department of Health Services, County Counsel, Internal
Services and any other relevant department to report back in 90 days on the feasibility of requiring a Labor Peace Agreements clause in, and as a material condition for entering into, new, amended, or renewals of Proposition A contracts and cafeteria services contracts, and requiring contractors who employ the workforce responsible for security, janitorial, and environmental, as well as cafeteria service workers in the County’s hospitals to provide information on available ACA health care insurance benefits and:

1. 100% employer-paid health care insurance benefits for full-time employees and their dependents at the Affordable Care Act Gold Level and Platinum Level Plan.
2. five or more paid sick days;
3. six or more paid holidays each year; and
4. five or more vacation days.

The report back should include cost estimates, the feasibility to implement these changes, and timeline.

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