

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

September 13, 2021

Health Care for Employees Contracted by the Department of Health Services

Thousands of people are contracted to work at County facilities, but unlike County employees, they do not have health care. This includes the contracted employees assigned at the County's hospitals and clinics and who are most at risk of being exposed to the pandemic.

In an effort to improve the livelihood of these contracted employees, many of whom are Black and Latino, the Board of Supervisors instructed the Chief Executive Office (CEO) to determine the feasibility of requiring contracted agencies to provide their employees health care and other paid time off. As directed by the motion, the review focused on critical job types such as security officers, janitorial, environmental clean-up who handle biohazardous fluids, and food service workers.

The CEO reported that no cost estimate for the proposed benefits could be provided since there was insufficient data on the fiscal and operational impacts. CEO further reported that six to eighteen months would be needed to compare cost proposals for new contract solicitations.

MOTION

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A cost estimate is needed if the Board is to make any decision on whether or not to require County contractors to provide employer-paid health care for their employees. To that end, the focus should be narrowed to contracted employees who are assigned to the County's Department of Health Services (DHS) that oversees hospitals and clinical facilities, and work in one of the four target categories listed above as the population most at risk for infectious exposures and therefore most in need of health care.

Furthermore, there have been claims that contracted employees who are assigned by their employer to County facilities are paid less and receive less benefits than employees of the same employer who are assigned to non-County facilities. Although this may be a result of the County negotiating a lower contract rate, this pay inequity brings standards down in service sector industries and only further deepens the wealth gap and harms our most vulnerable communities.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Director of the Department of Health Services (DHS) to report back to the Board with the following costs estimates in 90 days on:

1. The feasibility to require contracted employers to provide contracted security officers, janitorial and environmental clean-up, and food service workers who work at DHS' hospitals and clinics with healthcare at the level of the Affordable Care Act Gold Plan Individual Coverage; and
2. An assessment of whether or not there is a pay equity issue between contacted employees who are assigned to DHS facilities from those who are assigned to non-County facilities and provide recommendations to address.

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