

October 18, 2022

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

Proclaiming October 24, 2022 as “World Polio Day” in Los Angeles County

Polio, or poliomyelitis, is a disabling and potentially life-threatening disease caused by the poliovirus. The virus is very contagious, spreads through person-to-person contact, and can cause paralysis and long-term impairments. In the United States, the height of polio outbreaks occurred in the late 1940s and 1950s, disabling an average of more than 35,000 people each year. In 1955, the invention of a polio vaccine led to a dramatic decrease in cases; with widespread vaccination efforts in the 1960s and 1970s in the United States the threat of polio transmission was reduced. The last case of polio in Los Angeles County was reported in 1987. However, a recent case of paralytic polio in an unvaccinated adult in Rockland County, New York in July 2022 and ongoing spread in countries such as Pakistan and Afghanistan serve as a reminder that education messages on poliovirus and promotion of vaccination among persons who are behind on poliovirus and other routine immunizations are needed.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), most people who get infected with poliovirus will not have visible symptoms, and about 1 out of 4 people infected with poliovirus will have flu-like symptoms that usually last 2 to 5 days, then go away on their own. A smaller group of people will develop more serious symptoms that affect the spinal cord and can cause meningitis or paralysis. Paralysis, the most severe symptom of polio, can lead to

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permanent disability and death if muscles that control breathing, and swallowing are involved. Children who seem to fully recover from polio can develop new pain, weakness, and paralysis up to 15 to 40 years later, a condition referred to as post-polio syndrome. The immediate and long-term effects of the poliovirus can lead to limitations in daily life and disability, and the Polio Clinic at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center, a Los Angeles County Department of Health Services facility, has been treating Los Angeles residents with polio for over half a century.

There are two vaccines that can prevent polio. Inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV) is given as an injection and the oral poliovirus vaccine (OPV) which is a liquid. Since 2000, the United States has only been using IPV while OPV is still used throughout much of the world. IPV protects against paralytic polio in 99-100 percent of people who receive the recommended vaccine doses. In the United States, IPV is given as part of routine childhood vaccines in four doses beginning at 2 months old with the last dose at aged 4 to 6 years. Unvaccinated adults are recommended to get 3 doses of IPV.

In 1988, the launch of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative was spearheaded by national governments, the World Health Organization, Rotary International, the CDC, UNICEF, and others with the goal of eradicating polio worldwide. Since then, global cases have decreased by over 99 percent, proving that strategies for eradication work when they are fully implemented.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors Proclaim Monday, October 24, 2022 as “World Polio Day” throughout Los Angeles County and, in doing so, urge all residents, and city officials, as well as community groups, clubs, and organizations to join this effort in

promoting awareness of poliovirus and the need for vaccination throughout all communities.

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