

**MOTION BY SUPERVISORS MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS AND  
HILDA L. SOLIS**

**AUGUST 11, 2015**

**Improving the My Health LA Program**

My Health Los Angeles (My Health LA) is a no-cost health care program for low-income Los Angeles County (County) residents, ages 6 and older, who do not have and cannot get health insurance. My Health LA covers primary care and health screenings, health information and advice, specialty care, hospital and emergency care, prescription medicines, laboratory services and tests, and other related health care services. Services are provided by roughly 184 non-profit clinics called "Community Partners" as well as County clinics and hospitals. To be eligible, residents must show their income is at or below 138% of the federal poverty level.

After months of careful and deliberate planning, the County Department of Health Services (DHS) launched the program on October 1, 2014 in coordination with the Community Partner clinics. DHS imposed various programmatic safeguards and new allocation methodologies to control growth and maintain program integrity. Some of the initial program rules should be adjusted as My Health LA matures and strives to improve.

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SOLIS \_\_\_\_\_

RIDLEY-THOMAS \_\_\_\_\_

KUEHL \_\_\_\_\_

KNABE \_\_\_\_\_

ANTONOVICH \_\_\_\_\_

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For example, patients are enrolled for one year and must “reapply” to keep their coverage. This reapplication process, called “redetermination,” must not be so burdensome that it unnecessarily causes eligible persons to lose critical health care coverage. Otherwise, eligible sick patients will churn on and off the program, undermining the County’s efforts to keep residents healthy.

My Health LA includes \$5 million in funding for dental care services to Community Partner clinics who are able to provide medically necessary and preventive outpatient dental services. My Health LA currently includes 44 approved dental sites at 23 community partner clinics. Due to a new allocation methodology and slow ramp up of new sites, approximately \$1.7 M in dental funds will be left unspent in spite of patient demand for the services.

The County’s Department of Public Health estimates that roughly one million individuals in the County need substance use disorder services, of which currently 18-20% receive them. My Health LA does not currently cover substance abuse services.

Most recently, DHS committed to explore the creation of a hybrid pharmacy model which would retain the current use of dispensaries while implementing a new expanded pharmacy network so that patients have greater access to medically necessary medications.

As of June 30, 2015, approximately 120,500 individuals have enrolled in the program since its launch on October 1, 2014, which is below the projected 145,000 individuals who were anticipated to eventually enroll.

The County has full discretion to design the My Health LA program rules in a way that best ensures uninsured and underinsured County residents have access to critical and quality health care services. In November of 2015, DHS expects to have better data on patient utilization patterns that would better inform how the program can continue to be improved.

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**WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

Direct the Director of the Department of Health Services, in consultation with the Interim Director of the Department of Public Health and the Los Angeles County Community Clinic Association, to report back in writing in 120 days (unless corrective actions are needed sooner) on options to improve the My Health Los Angeles program including:

- a) Increasing the eligibility income threshold (to 150% or higher);
- b) Expanding the dental benefits;
- c) Adding substance abuse benefits;
- d) Allocating funding for integrated medical services at sites providing mental health and substance abuse services; and
- e) Relaxing redetermination requirements so that they are no more stringent and burdensome than federal Medicaid requirements, but program fiscal integrity is maintained.

**WE FURTHER MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

Direct the Director of the Department of Health Services to report back in 30 days on current redetermination retention rates.

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