

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

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Promotora/es are Essential to the COVID-19 Response and the Mission of Los Angeles County

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) has an integral Promotores de Salud Mental (Mental Health Promoters) program, in which trusted community members share the ethnicity, language, and life experiences of the community they serve. These individuals are trained by DMH and their role is to provide free educational workshops to individuals and families seeking needed resources on prevention and early intervention.

The role of the promotor/a has become even more critical during the COVID-19 pandemic. When a health crisis – like COVID-19 – disproportionately impacts certain communities, it requires an equitable and appropriate response. The promotora/es provide just that. Despite their clear and necessary role, there is confusion as to the future of the promotoras/es program and whether it will be collapsed into the community ambassador program established by DMH. Given the important cultural connection promotoras/es make with community, it is necessary for the program to remain intact

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with any proposed changes discussed with community and for community.

Additionally, Los Angeles County continues to see a need for culturally competent and linguistically sensitive services to respond to COVID-19. In the recent report *The Crisis of COVID-19 and Southeast Los Angeles*, the SELA Collaborative, Cal State LA Pat Brown Institute for Public Affairs, and Latino Decisions found that only 15% of Southeast Los Angeles had been tested for COVID-19 despite the wide availability of such testing in their community. A contributing factor to this disparity is likely to be anxiety and fear felt by many among Latino and Southeast Los Angeles communities regarding what a positive diagnosis will mean for their families and themselves if they test positive.

We are California / Somos CA, a group of Latino leaders in Southern California, submitted comprehensive recommendations regarding the COVID-19 response to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and Health Departments. Their recommendations address the disparities faced by the Latino community and include expanding proven strategies of trusted community health outreach like health promotoras/es. This recommendation, aligned with actions already taken by the Board of Supervisors, should be adopted immediately. The Promotores de Salud Mental program has a role to play in addressing this anxiety and available funding should be leveraged as part of the COVID-19 response.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Department of Mental Health to retain the Promotores de Salud Mental program as a stand-alone program, convene relevant stakeholders, including promotoras/es, to propose any changes to the program, and report

back to the Board of Supervisors twice a month until December 31, 2020.

2. Direct the Department of Mental Health to collect data enabling reporting for the uptake, utilization, and reach of the Promotores de Salud Mental program, including disaggregation by geography, service planning area, gender, race/ethnicity of program providers and recipient and report back to the Board of Supervisors in ninety (90) days.
3. Direct the Chief Executive Office to identify one-time funding from the federal CARES Act or any other funding source to immediately expand the capacity of the promotoras/es program to provide culturally and linguistically competent outreach and education to communities hardest hit by COVID-19.

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