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January 28, 2022

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.Ed.  
Director 

SUBJECT: **REINFORCING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO COVID-19 BOOSTERS AND PEDIATRIC VACCINES (ITEM 9, BOARD AGENDA OF NOVEMBER 30, 2021)**

This memorandum is in response to the Board of Supervisor's November 30, 2021 motion directing the Department of Public Health (Public Health) to: 1) Engage with local and ethnic media, social media influencers, podcasts, to clarify the eligibility for booster doses and emphasize the importance of booster shots; 2) Engage with community-based organizations, federally-qualified health clinics (FQHCs), schools, and faith-based organizations to participate in efforts to encourage booster and pediatric shots, and to partner on hosting vaccination clinics for the residents they serve; 3) Explore the feasibility of identifying existing funding to re-establish a vaccine incentive program, incentivizing boosters and childhood vaccinations; 4) Develop a plan to ensure that facilities serving the most vulnerable residents, such as senior facilities and those serving residents with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, are addressed through the booster vaccination campaign in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner; 5) Regularly update the County Vaccination Dashboard to include booster shot and pediatric data broken down by demographic, city/community, and age; 6) Contact individuals vaccinated through the homebound program and proactively schedule appointments for their booster dose; 7) Collaborate with the Department of Mental Health and instruct Community Health Workers/promotoras to incorporate the importance of boosters and pediatric doses into outreach and messaging; 8) Prioritize areas in the HPI+ ZIP codes and high need ZIP codes as indicated by the Vulnerability and Recovery Index for mobile vaccination efforts for boosters and pediatric vaccination doses; and 9) Report back in 60 days on the results of these directives.

### **Background**

On September 24, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) endorsed the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' (ACIP) recommendation for a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines in certain populations. On October 21, 2021 the recommendations were expanded for individuals who received a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, the following groups were eligible for a booster shot at six months or more after their initial series:

- 65 years and older
- Age 18+ who live in long-term care settings
- Age 18+ who have underlying medical conditions
- Age 18+ who work or live in high-risk settings

On November 29, the CDC strengthened its booster recommendation and approved for everyone ages 18 and older to get a booster shot either when they are six months after their initial Pfizer or Moderna series or two months after their initial Johnson & Johnson (J&K) vaccine. On December 9, 2021, the CDC added 16- and 17-year-olds to their booster recommendations followed by the addition of 12- to 15-year-olds on January 5, 2022. Currently anyone 12 years and older is eligible to get a booster shot five months after their primary series with Pfizer or Moderna or two months after their J&J vaccine.

**Pediatric vaccines:** On November 2, the CDC accepted the ACIP recommendation that the Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric product (containing one third the dose of the adult product) should be recommended for children 5-11 years of age. On January 5, 2022, the CDC also recommended that moderately or severely immunocompromised children 5-11 years of age should receive a third dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric product as part of their primary series. Pfizer's trials for those six months of age to five years old are still ongoing, with results expected in the first quarter of 2022.

### **Media Engagement**

Since last year, Public Health has held weekly media briefings in English and in Spanish to share information on boosters and pediatric vaccines, including their importance, requirements for receiving a booster, who can receive a booster and when, and more. These media briefings are regularly attended by the following media outlets: Los Angeles Times, LA Daily News, CBS/KCAL, NBC, ABC, Telemundo, Fox, Spectrum, KNX, KPCC, and Univision.

Additionally, Public Health has held more than a dozen virtual town hall events to provide updates and answer questions from residents about COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters. To date, more than 120,000 people have viewed these virtual town halls, which also provide real-time translations in Spanish, Chinese, and Korean. Public Health also engaged and partnered with nearly 20 local community social media influencers, which range from writers, bloggers, personalities, businesses and more. These influencers held Live interviews on their social channels with Public Health officials and posted original content about the COVID-19 vaccines and boosters. The influencer's followers are primarily made up of Black and Latinx residents, who are key in targeting vaccination and booster messaging.

Influencers include:

**LIVE IG with DPH**

Name	Follow Counts
Erick Gallindo*	IG - 9k
Joyce Louis-Jean*	IG - 63.6k Tiktok - 14.7k
Genever*	IG - 5.4k
Poor People's Campaign* with Rev. Eddie Anderson	IG - 46k IG-1.5k
Daniel French	IG - 34.2k
Sam Lopez	IG - 75.8k
Sarah Jakes Roberts	IG - 1.8M

**Content Creation**

Name	Follow Counts
Jen Ruggirello*	IG - 290k
Kahara Hodges*	IG - 32.8k
Compton Cowboys*	IG - 156k
Hilltop Coffee*	IG - 37k
Blume and Plume *	IG - 267k
Reema Khrais (Market Place)	IG - 1.9k (Reema) IG-38.8k (marketplace)
Fernando Hurtado	IG - 1.5k
Daniel Hernandez	Twitter - 25.4k
Austin Cross	Twitter - 2.1k
Ashley Suh Alvarado	Twitter - 6.2k

Finally, Public Health has continued publishing its podcast, “Public Health LA,” across podcast listening platforms, which features interviews with Public Health officials on a variety of topics, including boosters.

- [December 2<sup>nd</sup> Episode – Kids Age 5-11 and the COVID-19 Vaccine](#)
- [November 2<sup>nd</sup> Episode – COVID-19 Vaccine Boosters and Holiday Guidance](#)
- [October 5<sup>th</sup> Episode – Schools, Kids, and COVID-19](#)

**Community Engagement and Vaccination Clinics**

The department has engaged with community-based organizations, FQHCs, schools, and faith-based organizations (FBOs) to participate in efforts to encourage booster and pediatric shots, and to partner on hosting vaccination clinics for the residents they serve through many different activities detailed below:

*Community Based Organizations (CBOs):*

We have partnered with CBOs, FBOs, and local schools to get our students vaccinated. We are currently in the process of awarding up to 40 grants of \$5,000 each to CBOs with school partnership grants to increase participation and outreach at school vaccine clinics throughout the county. To date, 24 CBOs/FBOs are in the pipeline to receive these funds. In addition, the school teams have:

- Partnered with 31 CBOs to date to support promotion and outreach of school vaccine clinics and speak with parents and families about the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Provided initial training sessions for CBO staff with a Public Health physician to provide information on the COVID-19 vaccine, boosters, how to talk with parents, how to answer difficult questions, and so forth. We are also in the process of creating weekly “office hours” for members of the CBOs to receive regular vaccine updates as well as to ask questions from our subject matter experts.

*FQHCs:*

- Promoted FQHCs’ and area school district partnerships for special booster events and regularly scheduled, ongoing pediatric, and community vaccination support.
- Offered clinics emergent/urgent weekend vaccination support opportunities, offering pediatric vaccines, primary and second doses, and boosters.
- Prioritized and expedited pediatric vaccine supply to clinics hosting large school-based vaccine and booster events.
- Encouraged clinic leadership participation in the Weekly Public Health Pediatric Vaccine Office Hours, providing ongoing pediatric vaccine education, resources to overcome parent vaccine hesitation, and peer education, Q/A and support.
- Identified and vetted 3 FQHCs located in school districts with high HPI+ populations, and vaccine hesitancy, for participation in a pilot program which will extend vaccination events to include social support and services to the community.
- Vaccine Preventable Disease Control Medical Director presented regular pediatric vaccine updates to the Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County Chief Medical Officer/Chief Executive Officer Committee to prepare them for pediatric vaccine planning and upcoming approvals.

*Schools:*

Public Health has provided a variety of activities to engage with schools to participate in efforts to encourage boosters and pediatric vaccines. These include:

- Toolkits/Communication:
  - Updated Public Health school vaccine toolkit online, created to offer assistance to schools and districts interested in holding vaccine clinics, to include information on booster doses and pediatric third doses.
  - Advised Los Angeles Office of Education (LACOE) in their toolkit creation and updates to align with our messaging on boosters and pediatric doses.

- Meeting with LACOE and the Public Health communications team weekly to align messaging on boosters and pediatric vaccine.
- Vaccine providers:
  - Strongly encouraged all school COVID-19 vaccine providers to offer boosters for all 12 years of age and greater as well as the pediatric vaccine product.
  - Identified and connected vaccine providers with additional clinic personnel/volunteers to help with registration and clinic flow to support the increased demand for boosters and pediatric doses at school vaccine clinics, collaborating with CBOs and other Public Health resources.
- School Vaccine Clinics:
  - Working with districts and individual schools, 533 school located vaccine clinics are scheduled for January 2022 with >80% in priority areas and nearly 500 scheduled for February.
  - School Vaccine Team is supporting schools with outreach and promotion efforts, including booster guidance, parent townhalls with subject matter experts prior to events, and on-site support.
  - School Vaccine Team is directly contacting charters and private schools in areas identified as having large populations of 5- to 11-year-olds and low vaccine access and asking them to partner with us to provide a school located vaccine clinic.
  - Continuing communication with school districts through our liaisons to encourage regular vaccine clinics at school locations.
  - Sent incentives (books) to our key school vaccine providers and CBO partners to encourage vaccination in students.
- Pediatric Information Hours –Since November of last year, we have done direct outreach to engage community pediatricians and pediatric providers in weekly pediatric information hours to relay timely updates on pediatric vaccine, boosters, to answer questions, and to foster group discussions. We are collaborating with the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Family Practices, and Los Angeles County Medical Association to invite pediatricians to these sessions.

***FBOs:***

To date, we have worked with 426 FBOs and coordinated 311 vaccine booster clinics since September of last year. Nearly 12,000 community residents have been vaccinated at these faith-based clinics. We have also partnered with 31 local FBOs to provide grassroots grants to assist with the cost of hosting vaccination clinics. We have awarded over \$150,000 in grant funds to these faith institutions.

**Incentive Program Funding**

Currently, Public Health has a California Department of Public Health (CDPH)/CDC award of \$1,000,000 approved for vaccine incentives that is split between two priority groups: 1) \$500,000 for Patients Experiencing Homelessness (PEH) and 2) \$500,000 for schools. No other COVID-19 funding sources currently have allocations for vaccine incentives and new funding awards have required restrictive and targeted expectations on activities, and vaccine incentives have not been

prioritized by the grantors. Public Health has successfully partnered with other entities such as CDPH and local partners to provide additional incentives for our vaccine efforts.

*PEH Incentives:*

Public Health is working with the Department of Health Services (DHS) Housing for Health (HFH) which plans to begin using these funds next month with a mix of incentives: gift cards and tangible goods such as tents and sleeping bags. The gift cards will range from \$25-\$50, with a maximum cap per person of \$100. DHS-HFH is currently providing gift cards as vaccine incentives through funding from United Way, with good results.

*School Incentives:*

Public Health has obtained an order of 501 cases of Scholastic books for school-aged children for incentives for schools. These vaccination incentives, averaging approximately \$10 per book, are given to youth after they receive their COVID vaccination. The books were distributed to our Public Health PODs in early January and are now being distributed to our School-based vaccination clinics. In addition to the books, we will be placing orders for smaller Sports equipment (like balls, jump ropes) that can also be used as COVID vaccine incentives.

*CDPH Food Trucks:*

In the fall of last year, CDPH provided COVID vaccine incentives in LA County (and other counties) in the form of food trucks (e.g., taco trucks, grilled cheese trucks, ice cream trucks, etc). The food trucks were placed at vaccinating clinics in geographic locations with a focus on HPI and low-vaccination rates. The trucks provided up to 200 no-cost meals per event and were given out to those receiving a COVID vaccination and their families. The trucks went to standing PODs as well as pop-up sites. Public Health partnered with them by providing the lists of vaccinating clinics in LA County to choose from and ensuring proper permits and amended liability policies that covered the County. Sometimes the CDPH food trucks were accompanied by other fun experiences such as DJs and crafts for kids. These were well-received and added excitement to a vaccinating site.

*Partnerships:*

There are local partners who have donated resources (i.e., tickets to sporting or entertainment events) to incentivize vaccinations and those partnerships could be further explored for ongoing support. Successful opportunities in the last quarter included the following:

- October-November 2021: UCLA Athletics donated 7,000 promo codes for school-aged youth 5-18 to attend a UCLA football game at the Rose Bowl. A student could redeem the promo code for up to three tickets. In the end, 4,558 promo codes were distributed to students who received a COVID vaccination.
- December 2021: The L.A. Dodgers organization donated 100 Holiday Festival at Dodgers Stadium ticket packs to Public Health to support the COVID-19 vaccination effort. The Holiday Festival ticket packages were awarded to people vaccinated at Public Health Obregon and Ted Watkins Parks COVID-19 vaccination sites. Each site gave away 50 packages, which were distributed within hours in one day. Each ticket package included two admission tickets and one general parking pass (additional tickets were available for purchase online).

## **Serving the Most Vulnerable**

### *Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF):*

Public Health has communicated with skilled nursing facilities in LA County on the importance of booster doses for the COVID-19 vaccines and how to access booster doses in multiple ways: four webinars to all SNFs starting October 29 of last year with the latest on January 10, 2022 as well as multiple email communications. These communications included messaging about the updated State and County Health Officer Orders requiring booster doses for all workers in SNFs by February 1, 2022. We've also conducted a focused four-week booster roll-out to all 342 SNFs from late October (when all vaccine types were approved for booster doses) to late November that involved calling all SNFs to assess their access to COVID vaccines and offering on-site assistance from Public Health mobile vaccine teams for those who needed help. After this initial roll-out, Public Health has continued to prioritize SNFs to ensure they have received on-site assistance for vaccine and booster administration when needed through our mobile vaccine teams. Also, in late December 2021, Public Health started to reach out to SNFs reporting low booster coverage among staff, residents, or both to offer education and strategy building sessions on improving booster confidence among their staff, residents, and families. This effort is still ongoing and will continue to ensure that staff meet the vaccine booster requirement by February 1. Through these efforts, Public Health has confirmed no SNFs reporting issues with access to booster doses.

### *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities:*

Public Health has partnered with organizations to prioritize vaccine access through mobile vaccine services as well as engaging FQHCs with partnerships with entities such as the regional centers and residential facilities serving this vulnerable population to ensure they had access to vaccines to provide boosters for their clients. The Department prioritized allocation of supply and vaccines for providers serving regional center catchment areas and providers engaged with organizations serving this population.

## **Vaccine Dashboard**

Currently, the COVID-19 Vaccination dashboard displays twice-a-week data updates of booster shot and pediatric (age groups of 5- to 11-year-olds and 12- to 17-year-olds) vaccination estimates of one+ dose and fully vaccinated broken down separately by city/community, school district, race/ethnicity and age group. Since pediatric booster/additional doses were only approved last week, these data will be displayed on the dashboard with the same breakdowns by February 2022.

## **Homebound Program**

Since October 2021, the Public Health Call Center staff have called a list of 1,293 homebound referrals who received their primary series from partnering in-home vaccination providers to inquire about interest in the booster dose. This list of referrals had ranging booster due dates through February 2022 and have been assigned to in-home vaccination providers for scheduling on a monthly basis based on upcoming due dates. There were three contact attempts made to each client by call center staff. Out of 1,293 referrals, about 37% expressed interest in the booster dose and were routed to homebound providers for scheduling. A small subset of referrals, 6%, were not eligible for the booster dose due to eligibility criteria at the time of the call. Those clients are in the process of being

re-contacted by call center staff. The remaining 57% of clients were either unable to be reached, not interested, or used another source for booster vaccination. Of the referrals routed to homebound providers for scheduling the booster dose, 19% have been vaccinated and an additional 12% have been contacted or are scheduled for an appointment. About 63% of referrals are pending contact from a provider and are due for their booster doses January-February 2022. The remaining 6.5% of referrals were either vaccinated through another source at the time of contact or unable to be reached. Many in-home vaccination providers since have been tracking their own referrals for booster follow-up; the homebound team will also continue to communicate with call center staff for any support needed to contact other vaccinated clients who are approaching booster eligibility.

Homebound Booster Outreach Update 1/13/2022

# Vaccinated homebound referrals sent to Public Health Call Center for booster outreach (due dates through Feb. 2022)	Total referred to homebound providers (interested in booster)	Contacted/scheduled by homebound provider	Vaccinated with booster by homebound provider	Pending contact by homebound provider	Unable to reach/refused/other	Received booster through other source
1,293	36.7% (474)	12% (57)	18.8% (89)	62.7% (297)	4.2% (20)	2.3% (11)

**Collaboration with Department of Mental Health (DMH) and CHWOI**

The Community Health Worker Outreach Initiative (CHWOI) corresponds weekly with contracted agencies, community partners, and other County Departments including DMH to ensure that all partners have the most accurate and up-to-date information when conducting COVID-related outreach. CHWOI, in coordination with Public Health’s Office of Communications, provide curated COVID-19 messaging that highlights current trends in COVID cases and vaccinations, updates in eligibility and availability of vaccines, and other COVID-related resources, and critical key messages for community residents. Information about the eligibility and availability of both boosters and pediatric doses was shared as soon as doses were approved for administration and updates to eligibility criteria will continue to be shared as changes occur. From September 24, 2021 – January 13, 2022, CHWOI partner agencies and Public Health teams have conducted at total of 200,492 outreaches, reaching more than 1.5 million residents and resulting in nearly four thousand vaccination appointments scheduled.

**Prioritization of HPI+ zip codes**

Mobile vaccine efforts since inception have prioritized HPI+ zip codes and vulnerable populations. The mobile vaccine team both prioritizes referrals that come in by HPI+ zip codes and actively identifies potential partnerships in the hardest hit communities which are identified by HPI+ zip code status and vaccination rates in the area. To date, the mobile vaccine team has held 75% of their sites in HPI+ zip codes with over 3,365 sites offering booster doses. The mobile vaccine team began offering boosters as soon as they were approved as well as pediatric vaccines. Pediatric vaccines are offered at 85% of the mobile vaccine sites and in addition works with the school team to specifically provide vaccine at school sites. Below is information provided for the school sites showing 71.6% of all school with clinics are in the HPI+ zip codes.



**Table 3.** Summary of schools with clinics, total clinics, and districts holding clinics by Healthy Places Index Plus (HPI+)\*, Data as of 01-11-2022 8:45AM

	Total, n	HPI+*, n	HPI+*, %
Schools with clinics (completed/scheduled/pending)	712	510	71.6
Total clinics (completed/scheduled/pending)^	5199	4418	85.0
Schools with completed clinics**	682	487	71.4
Total completed clinics	4297	3613	84.1
Schools with scheduled/pending clinics**	124	100	80.6
Total scheduled/pending clinics	902	805	89.2
Districts holding clinics	68	49	72.1

\*The HPI+ indicator was updated to reflect zip codes in the lowest quartile of the Healthy Places Index plus locations with low vaccination rates (<75% for 5+ year old fully vaccinated coverage).

\*\*Non-mutually exclusive groups. Some schools with completed clinics also have scheduled/pending clinics.

We look forward to providing you updates on the progress of these efforts to provide equitable access to vaccines and booster doses. If you need additional information, please let me know.

BF:gm

Cc: Chief Executive Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors