

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

June 4, 2024

**Children and Older Adults Drowning Prevention**

Swimming in pools and other bodies of water is a common recreational activity that allows for families and community to congregate and can offer many health benefits. Unfortunately, this activity can also be unsafe when individuals lack swimming and water safety skills. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), drowning is the primary cause of death among children ages 1-4, and the second leading cause among children ages 5-14. Meanwhile, adults 65 years of age and older have the second highest rate of drowning.

Notably, the CDC indicates that drowning increased by 28% among children ages 1-4, and by 19% among adults ages 65-79, in 2022 compared to 2019. CDC highlights that a lack of swimming and water safety skills, particularly in Black and Latino communities, is a contributing factor.

Across Los Angeles County (County), we know that the factors are many. This is why in 2021 the Board of Supervisors unanimously passed the motion introduced by Supervisors Solis and Barger, calling for countywide efforts to prevent drowning in

**MOTION**

SOLIS \_\_\_\_\_

MITCHELL \_\_\_\_\_

HAHN \_\_\_\_\_

BARGER \_\_\_\_\_

HORVATH \_\_\_\_\_

public and private swimming pools, requiring lifeguard services in all public swimming pools, and making all fatal drowning related data publicly available.

Specifically, the motion directed the Department of Public Health to amend the County Code to require implementation of Aquatic Safety Plans (include lifeguard responsibilities) and require first aid and CPR training, across public swimming areas and children's camps and schools. Additionally, the motion called for an ordinance amendment requiring lifeguard services at public swimming pools located in children's camps and schools, and identification of the number of lifeguards required. This motion also directed the Department of Public Health to consult with representatives from across sectors and organizations to develop public messaging, and to promote resources on drowning prevention.

As a result, staff catalogued drowning prevention resources online and found that many of the preexisting educational materials were largely in English and Spanish, and identified a need to have resources available in additional languages. Additionally, stakeholder engagement led to discussions on messaging for diverse audiences, and innovative projects for drowning prevention.

Given these findings, and the fact that in the county three children drown each day, we must continue to do more. As summertime approaches, we must ensure county residents are informed and knowledgeable of swimming and water safety. There is a wealth of educational materials online, and the Department of Public Health's Drowning Prevention webpage has information related to drowning prevention and water safety. However, we must also ensure this information is reaching diverse audiences in multiple languages and in culturally appropriate ways.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors direct the Department of Public Health and the Aging and Disabilities Department to:

1. Facilitate a countywide public safety campaign in multiple languages and utilizing traditional, ethnic, hyperlocal, and social media, promoting drowning prevention and water safety, as well as county resources.
2. Promote county ordinances established in 2021 to cities in the county and develop tools to promote its adoption.
3. Include a banner on Aging and Disabilities Department webpage including information on drowning prevention and water safety, and link to the Department of Public Health's Environmental Health webpage on drowning prevention.
4. Report back to the Board in writing in 60 days on the outcomes of this motion, and implementation of county ordinances established in 2021.

# # #

HLS:jgd:ac