

**MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN**

AGN. NO.  
November 6, 2024

**Proclaiming November 2024 as “Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Month” in Los Angeles County**

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a progressive lung disease caused by damage to the airways or parts of the lungs that blocks airflow and makes it hard to breathe. In the United States, approximately 17 million individuals have been diagnosed with CPOD, while millions more remain undiagnosed, unaware they are living with this serious disease.

COPD, which includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema, is caused by long-term exposure to harmful lung irritants such as cigarette smoke, air pollution, chemical fumes, and dust. While one of the primary risk factors for COPD is smoking, approximately 25 percent of people with COPD have never smoked. Other risk factors include a history of poorly controlled asthma or early childhood respiratory infections, alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency; and those with underdeveloped lungs. The disease disproportionately affects those living in underserved and rural communities as well as veterans, where it occurs between 8% and 19%.

The symptoms of COPD may not appear until after lung damage has occurred and symptoms can worsen over time, especially if exposure to irritants continues. People may experience a chronic cough, shortness of breath, wheezing or whistling sounds when

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breathing, fatigue, swelling in the feet, ankles, and legs, and frequent respiratory infections. These symptoms greatly reduce the quality of life for those affected and their families and can lead to disability. This debilitating disease is not curable, however, COPD is both preventable and treatable. Early diagnosis and effective treatment are critical to managing the disease, preventing progression, and improving the well-being of those affected.

COPD imposes a significant health care burden, which includes physical, emotional, and financial stresses. According to the American Lung Association, COPD medical costs for people ages 45 and above is \$24.0 billion each year. The projected cost attributable to COPD is expected to increase to \$60.5 billion by 2029. California is one of the states with the highest economic burden of COPD: 3rd in the U.S. at \$2.42 billion. The death rate for COPD has doubled since 1969, even as the number of deaths for other chronic conditions has declined.

COPD is a significant health concern in Los Angeles County (County). According to 2022 data, the mortality rate for COPD in the County was 19.7 per 100,000 people. Additionally, about 4.6% of the adult population in California is estimated to have COPD, which translates to hundreds of thousands affected in the County, given its large population. Moreover, the County consistently receives poor air quality grades, including an "F" for high ozone levels, which exacerbates COPD symptoms.

To address risk factors related to COPD and increase health of County residents. The LA County Department of Public Health's (DPH) Tobacco Control and Prevention Program works to increase access to smoking cessation services, reduce youth access to tobacco products and reduce exposure to secondhand smoke in indoor (e.g., multi-unit

housing) and outdoor areas. DPH's Office of Environmental Justice and Climate Health strategic plan prioritizes work that ensures that everyone in the County can enjoy lives safe from toxic environmental exposures. Additionally, DPH has several educational and awareness campaigns that address risk factors associated with COPD.

Raising public awareness of COPD is vital for promoting prevention strategies, such as smoking cessation and reducing exposure to environmental risks, as well as for educating about the benefits of early diagnosis, pulmonary rehabilitation, and medical care. During COPD Awareness Month, recognized in November, healthcare professionals, patients, and advocates join forces to spread the word about the disease's risk factors, symptoms, and treatment options, while offering support to individuals living with COPD and their families.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Proclaim November 2024 as "Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Awareness Month" in the County of Los Angeles; and
2. Encourage all Los Angeles County residents, healthcare providers, and organizations to participate in activities to foster awareness, promote early detection and treatment, and support individuals and families affected by Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

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