

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL

November 18, 2025

Empowering County Workers to Serve All Residents Without Interference

Los Angeles County (County) employees deliver a broad range of services that are essential to the well-being of our communities. County-operated hospitals and clinics serve as places of healing. Our libraries and parks are community hubs, offering spaces for joy, learning and recreation. Our social services offices are a lifeline to vital programs that sustain and empower countless residents.

Many County employees who serve in these spaces are bound by professional and ethical obligations. For example, our physicians have taken the Hippocratic Oath, pledging to act in the best interests of their patients, to do no harm, and to protect patient privacy. Other clinical and frontline staff are guided by similar codes of professional conduct.

Recent federal immigration enforcement activities have resulted in the presence of armed immigration officers in County facilities, creating an intimidating atmosphere for residents and staff alike. It is critical that the County empower its employees to continue providing services without undue interference or fear—particularly by maintaining County health facilities as private and secure spaces dedicated to healing.

County employees must know that when they perform their duties in good faith, take peaceful steps to protect the rights of our residents, and uphold their ethical and

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professional responsibilities, the County will stand firmly behind them.

California Government Code 995.8 allows, but does not require, that a public entity like the County provide for the defense of a criminal action or proceeding brought against an employee or former employee if:

- (a) The criminal action or proceeding is brought on account of an act or omission in the scope of his employment as an employee of the public entity; and
- (b) The public entity determines that such defense would be in the best interests of the public entity and that the employee or former employee acted, or failed to act, in good faith, without actual malice and in the apparent interests of the public entity.

In the wake of heightened and unprecedented attacks on Los Angeles communities in the name of immigration enforcement, the Board of Supervisors has approved motions to clarify and standardize policies relating to the delivery of health services for immigrants, including *Protecting Immigrants' Rights to Health Care Access: SB81 Implementation in LA County (Solis/Mitchell)*.¹

Recent experiences in the Second District have highlighted the challenges faced by County patients and employees in the face of such enforcement activities. Our County employees have consistently demonstrated courage and commitment in the face of fearsome threats. Our front-line providers were heroes during the COVID-19 crisis. Once again, it is critical that the County's essential front-line workers and its entire workforce receive the full support and guidance necessary to continue providing vital services with courage and compassion.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS HEREBY DECLARE:

That, in the face of federal immigration enforcement against Los Angeles County residents, the County of Los Angeles will provide for the defense of County employees who are charged with federal criminal offenses arising from non-violent actions or

¹ <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/207967.pdf>

omissions undertaken in good faith, without actual malice, and within the scope of their County employment, in accordance with California Government Code 995.8.

I FURTHER MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DIRECT the Director of the Department of Health Services, in consultation with County Counsel, to:

1. Develop and implement consistent County-wide guidelines governing “blackout” and law enforcement contact policies, with clear provisions regarding their applicability to patients detained by federal immigration authorities. (“Black out” policies bar public disclosure of a patient’s presence);
2. Develop and implement policies allowing patients to consent to the release of information to family members, assigned counsel and, if appropriate, governmental representatives, including Members of Congress;
3. Develop and implement policies establishing procedures for County personnel to verify and document the identity of any unknown or apparent law enforcement officials accompanying detained patients;
4. Instruct County personnel to insist federal immigration enforcement agents leave the room when appropriate to either preserve patient confidentiality and/or allow patients to rest, and to document any refusals by such agents to comply;
5. Instruct all relevant department personnel regarding Medicaid and Medicare discharge planning requirements and their applicability to patients detained by immigration enforcement;
6. Instruct County personnel to document any federal immigration enforcement actions that may jeopardize the health or safety of Department of Health Services patients, and to promptly notify County Counsel so that Counsel may consider pursuing any timely and appropriate injunctive relief; and
7. Report back in writing within 60 days on the implementation of directives 1 through 6 and ensure the report back is aligned with, and does not delay, the report to the Board required by the September 2025 motion, *Protecting Immigrants’ Rights to Health Care Access*.