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November 18, 2025

Advancing a Unified Prevention Framework for Children, Youth, and Families

Los Angeles County (County) stands at a pivotal inflection point. For too long, our systems have been designed to respond after harm has occurred, reacting to crises rather than preventing them. As a result, more children and vulnerable adults become involved with County systems in ways that could have been avoided through a greater emphasis on prevention.

Major shifts in the federal, state and local landscape, call for a more strategic approach—one that leverages finite resources and capacity to improve life outcomes. Children, youth, and families who disproportionately shoulder the impact of poverty, systemic racism, community disinvestment, and other structural inequities bear an unfair burden when systems fail to align. These circumstances drive disproportionate representation in our systems, poor outcomes in health, education, safety, and economic stability and erode trust between government institutions and the communities they are meant to serve.

In September 2021, the Board adopted a motion titled, *Establishing the Los*

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Angeles County Office of Prevention Services,¹ with direction to convene a Prevention Services Task Force (PSTF) under the Chief Executive Office's (CEO) Anti-Racism, Diversity and Inclusion Initiative (ARDI). The PSTF was tasked with recommending a governance model, conducting a funding stream analysis, and proposing prevention metrics rooted in the social determinants of health. These recommendations would be used to inform the creation of an Office of Prevention Services to coordinate services and programs across departments through a prevention and promotion lens centered on equity.

In July 2023, the Board adopted a motion titled, *Building Los Angeles County's Prevention Infrastructure*,² directing the creation of a prevention and promotion infrastructure, and establishing the Prevention and Promotion Systems Governing Committee (PPSGC) and the Prevention and Promotion Coordination and Implementation Team (PPCIT) to oversee coordination of this vision.

The PPSGC is comprised of nine major entities all deeply engaged in enhancing the health and well-being of County residents: the CEO, Departments of Public Social Services; Public Health; Children and Family Services; CEO-ARDI; CEO-Homeless Initiative; Chief Information Officer (CIO); Mental Health; and First 5 Los Angeles. Its focus domains include child welfare and family well-being, behavioral health, and homelessness and housing. The PPSGC has begun building the infrastructure for coordinated prevention efforts including user journey mapping and systems analyses to identify points of intervention. However, these efforts have not resulted in meaningful shifts in outcome indicators such as reductions in child welfare activities, youth disconnection, or improvements in housing stability. To date, the primary impact lies in laying the foundation for prevention focused investment, aligning County systems, and establishing a framework for long-term change.

The County's ongoing commitment to creating a prevention and promotion infrastructure—particularly for children, youth and families—represents a decisive

¹ <http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/161827.pdf>

² <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/182741.pdf>

opportunity to shift away from a reactive, crisis-driven model toward a proactive, coordinated system. From the work of the PSTF to that of the PPSGC and PPCIT, the County has taken significant steps to enhance services and programs through coordination, collaboration, and shared governance. In a pursuit to interrupt cycles of harm before they take root, these efforts aim to align investment in upstream solutions, center family and community assets, and advance equity driven strategies. Combined, these actions will help communities benefit from opportunity, improve access to resources, strengthen protective factors that foster resilience, and enable residents to thrive across all neighborhoods. It also means holding ourselves accountable to create conditions that support well-being in moments of crisis and across entire lifespans and generations.

Through these efforts, the County reaffirms its responsibility to transform how systems work together, creates a prevention-first infrastructure that reduces reliance on punitive interventions, elevates community voices, and ensures every child and family has the foundation necessary to flourish.

These steps mark essential foundational work, yet the Board's vision has not been fully realized. While PPSGC member entities are collaborating effectively, we must consider that there are additional entities not officially engaged that are eager to participate and contribute relevant experience to this effort. The structure of the prevention and promotion work remains somewhat fragmented, and while the infrastructure plan is ambitious, its ambition sometimes outpaces clarity in execution.

The July 2023 motion called for an executive director to oversee the PPSGC. Although candidates were interviewed over the past year, budget curtailments prevented the position from being funded and filled. Meanwhile, communities disproportionately impacted by poverty, racism, and intergenerational harm cannot afford incremental change.

The national context compounds these challenges. Under the current federal administration, resources for the social safety net are increasingly uncertain, with funding streams constrained and program mandates shifting. This has placed additional pressure on local governments to do more with less. Where federal support is limited, the County must ensure that every dollar is strategically deployed and tied to measurable results.

Acting within its authority, the PPSGC recently agreed to rotate out the CEO and CIO and include the Departments of Aging and Disabilities and Youth Development. Changing the PPSGC's composition ensures that additional powerful voices can join this important endeavor.

The PPCIT has worked to identify opportunities to strengthen departmental collaboration, remove barriers to access, and improve alignment of services impacting children, youth, and families. These efforts build on years of prevention-focused work, recognizing that communities disproportionately impacted by poverty, racism, and systemic inequities require coordinated, upstream strategies to improve long-term outcomes.

We now have a unique opportunity to accelerate the promise the Board envisioned and transfer it into practice. We can streamline priorities for those most in need, and embed strong leadership within a single, accountable home for prevention and promotion — potentially by integrating and elevating the Office of Child Protection as the central hub for this work. This unified strategic framework should leverage existing departmental resources, reduce duplication, and strengthen accountability for results.

WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Direct the Executive Officer of the Board (EO) to collaborate with the Director of the Office of Child Protection (OCP), the Prevention and Promotion Coordination and Implementation Team (PPCIT), and the Prevention and Promotion Systems Governing Committee (PPSGC) to consolidate prevention efforts into a single coordinated structure within 90 days.
2. Direct the Director of OCP, in coordination with the PPSGC, EO and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), to develop recommendations for consolidating the PPSGC and OCP into a single prevention entity housed within the OCP. This entity should have clear leadership, accountability, and authority—including the option of restructuring to assume the role of a unified prevention entity supporting children, youth and families—and report back in writing in 180 days.
3. Direct the Director of OCP and PPSGC, in collaboration with the CEO, to inform the development of a new Countywide Prevention Strategic Plan focused on children, youth and families that:

- a. Identifies and focuses on three priority domains that drive the greatest impact for children, youth and families;
 - b. Aligns departmental prevention activities under a single framework;
 - c. Aligns coordinating bodies under a single framework;
 - d. Leverages existing resources across County departments,
 - e. Builds on the previous Prevention Services Task Force, PPSGC and PPCIT framework to clearly define shared goals, establish common metrics, and identify measurable outcomes aimed at reducing disparities and improving overall well-being; and
 - f. Establishes clear accountability for implementation.
4. Direct all relevant County department heads, including but not limited to the Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Public Health (DPH), Mental Health (DMH), Public Social Services (DPSS), Probation, Health Services, OCP, Youth Development (DYD), Homeless Services and Housing, and Economic Opportunity, to designate executive-level staff to participate in the development and implementation of the new strategic plan. The designated staff will be responsible for aligning departmental prevention activities, outcome goals, key indicators/metrics, timelines with the unified framework and incorporating the Countywide Prevention Strategic Plan into their own departmental workplans within 180 days.
5. Direct the Director of OCP, in collaboration with the PPSGC and the CEO, to return to the Board in 180 days with a plan that ensures coherence and consistency with OCP's developing strategic plan, including:
 - a. Departmental roles and responsibilities,
 - b. Specific prevention and promotion outcomes for children, youth, and families,
 - c. Metrics and timelines for measuring progress and reducing racial and community disparities, and
 - d. A plan for ongoing public reporting to ensure transparency and accountability.
6. Further instruct that upon adoption of the unified prevention framework, the

PPSGC meetings be sunset and direct the Director of OCP to convene a workgroup that meets regularly with representatives appointed by directors of the following: DPSS; DPH; DCFS; Chief Executive Office's - Anti-Racism, Diversity and Inclusion Initiative; DMH; Aging and Disabilities; DYD; and First 5 Los Angeles. These working group meetings shall advance cross-departmental prevention efforts. The Board Chair shall have the authority to designate and confirm which representatives or County departments are required to attend convenings of the prevention body, ensuring participation aligns with the Board's strategic priorities.

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