

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

AGN. NO.
June 9, 2025

Proclaiming June 2026 as National Aphasia Awareness Month in Los Angeles County

Aphasia is an acquired communication disorder that affects a person’s ability to speak, understand language, read, or write. However, it does not impact intelligence. Aphasia is far more common and impactful than many people realize, yet public awareness remains remarkably low. According to the National Aphasia Association¹ and the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)², more than two million Americans are currently living with aphasia, and approximately 180,000 people acquire aphasia each year. Aphasia most commonly occurs following a stroke or traumatic brain injury and can also result from neurodegenerative diseases.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identifies stroke as a leading cause of long-term disability in the United States. Stroke survivors may experience lasting communication impairments, depression, barriers to employment, as well as difficulty navigating healthcare systems and daily life. Individuals living with aphasia often experience misunderstanding, stigma, and social isolation because communication challenges are frequently mistaken for cognitive impairment. Importantly,

¹ <https://aphasia.org/>

² <https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/>

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aphasia also highlights broader challenges affecting many individuals living with disabilities and underscores the need for systems, institutions, and communities to become more accessible, grounded in principles of inclusion, equity, and language access.

Los Angeles County (County) plays an important role in supporting residents living with aphasia and other communication disabilities. Individuals with aphasia often encounter difficulty accessing healthcare and emergency services, barriers in employment and education, increased social isolation and loneliness, mental health impacts including anxiety and depression, and reduced participation in civic and community life due to communication barriers rather than cognitive limitations. As we strive to be a more inclusive County it is important to consider where systemic barriers can be comprehensively addressed.

The condition has significant implications for public health, disability access, healthcare equity, and social inclusion. A lack of aphasia awareness can delay diagnosis, reduce access to services, and create unnecessary barriers for people attempting to communicate in healthcare settings, workplaces, schools, and public spaces. Communication barriers may also affect an individual's ability to access emergency services, disaster response information, and other critical public services during times of crisis. This is where caregivers, advocates, and rehabilitation specialists play a critical role in supporting individuals with aphasia by helping them remain connected, and engaged, within their community and health care needs.

Increasing public awareness of aphasia is critical to reducing stigma, improving accessibility, strengthening communication supports, and ensuring individuals with communication disabilities are treated with dignity, respect, and inclusion in community

life. Raising awareness is therefore essential not only for aphasia, but also for advancing broader disability, including inclusion and accessibility efforts throughout the County. As we recognize National Aphasia Awareness Month, we reaffirm that communication is fundamental to human connection and civic participation. This month serves as both a recognition of resilience and a call to action to build a more accessible, compassionate, and inclusive County for everyone.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Proclaim June 2026 as National Aphasia Awareness Month in Los Angeles County and encourage residents, healthcare institutions, schools, employers, and community organizations to increase awareness and understanding of aphasia;
2. Encourage healthcare providers, educational institutions, employers, nonprofit organizations, and community partners throughout Los Angeles County to support individuals living with aphasia through public awareness efforts, inclusive communication practices, and caregiver support resources; and
3. Recognize the contributions of speech-language pathologists, rehabilitation professionals, caregivers, advocates, and community organizations whose work helps individuals living with aphasia maintain communication, independence, dignity, and meaningful participation in community life.

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