

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH

August 11, 2026

Promoting LA County’s Community Health Worker Services

Promotores, also known as Community Health Promoters (CHPs), play an integral role in Los Angeles County (County) and in the fabric of the wellbeing of our communities. They serve as trusted community members who provide our most underserved residents with educational and promotional services on physical and mental health care, along with linkage to human and social services. They are effective in improving the health of their communities and breaking down barriers, such as distrust and stigma, by utilizing their lived experience and incorporating methods that are culturally and linguistically informed.

Promotores have their roots in Latin America where the role was primarily reserved for women, known as “promotoras,” who would be trained in diverse health themes and provide peer education. The model was brought over to the United States via the U.S. Federal Migrant Health Act of 1962 and the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.¹ Since then, the model has been expanded to accompany all demographics of people.

Several County Departments include outreach and engagement methods for the administration and operation of their community/mental health services. Many of them also hire Community Health Workers (CHWs), Health Educators (HEs), and related roles

¹ Pérez, Leda M., and Martinez, Jacqueline. "Community health workers: social justice and policy advocates for community health and well-being." American journal of public health 98.1 (2008): 11-14.

MOTION

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to perform paid work, such as the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Department of Health Services (DHS), the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH), and the Justice, Care, and Opportunities Department (JCOD).

DMH operates the United Mental Health Promoters (UMHP) Program which focuses on mental health services including: (1) outreach and engagement, (2) educational workshops, and (3) linkages and referrals. In 2011, DMH started the Promotores de Salud Mental Program as a pilot project to address the high levels of mental health stigma in the Spanish-speaking community. Upon major success of the program, the County Board of Supervisors (BOS) voted in 2020 to approve the expansion of the Promoters program to serve the following additional communities: Black/African Heritage, Asian Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, Eastern European/Middle Eastern, LGBTQ+, and Individuals with Physical Disabilities. These programs together form the UMHP Program which includes hundreds of Promotores.

For all County residents to have access to the UMHP Program, DMH must leverage all types of outreach strategies, partnerships, and collaborations. For example, the younger generation is known to prefer online communication and have been shown to have increased mental health needs, so we need to be cognizant and make strides towards meeting the youth where they are to get them the services they need. DMH has collaborated with the County's Departments of Libraries and Parks & Recreation, and conducts referrals with DPH and DHS. They have also collaborated with outside entities such as El Sol's Community Health Workers/Promotores/Representatives (CHW/P/R) Consortium, the Los Angeles Dodgers, the Los Angeles Lakers, Univision, and others.

Annual data from the Promotores/UMHP program is tracked and reported in DMH's annual Cultural Competency Plan Report. Under the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) that went into effect July 1, 2026, DMH is required to track and report on outreach and engagement data as well. Current online presence and available information through the DMH website does not reflect the current successes or areas of improvement that the Promotores/UMHP Program achieves. In a time when funding for public programs is tumultuous and many residents are expected to lose access to them, we need to focus on how we are better leveraging existing resources within our successful programs. Though several County Departments that were previously mentioned utilize CHWs and related roles for community outreach and engagement, their activities are much different than those focused on in this motion (more specialized and/or more individual in nature) and are significantly smaller in workforce than DMH's UMHP Program. Having the other departments employ the same standards would not be an efficient use of resources or show an empirically significant amount of data.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to:

- 1) Incorporate into their United Mental Health Promoters (UMHP) Program the following strategies:
 - a. Continue specialized effort in reaching the 2020 expansion-approved targeted demographic groups that have not fully received mental health promotional services commensurate with their population size or projected need;

- b. Collaborate with the Department of Youth Development (DYD) to develop a communications strategy with existing resources on increasing outreach to youth;
 - c. Enhance digital visibility and presence by incorporating information and resource links to DMH's digital outreach (email, social media, digital applications); and
 - d. Increase visibility of the Program through social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, X/Twitter, BlueSky, YouTube, TikTok).
- 2) Continue and expand the promotion of the Promotores/UMHP Program through:
 - a. Continued collaboration with the Department of Public Health, Libraries, and Parks and Recreation on the distribution of related materials; and
 - b. Expanding collaborations with other possible departments to increase the visibility of the Program across the County.
- 3) Build out their website, specifically regarding the UMHP Program, in the following ways:
 - a. Include a dedicated contact for residents of the County to inquire about receiving health promotion services through one of the UMHP programs (delineated by Service Area (SA), if necessary);
 - b. Create a centralized online submission form for receiving requests (connecting with support, requesting a presentation, etc.);
 - c. Include specific email addresses for each of the SAs centralized team locations for the community to connect with;

- d. Upload existing modules/presentations for people to view online (slides, video recordings); and
 - e. Display, and update as needed, a dashboard containing the most recently published data on outreach and engagement, along with previously collected data (number of staff/volunteers, workshops, participants, languages, etc.).
- 4) Report back to the Board within 120 days on the progress and feasibility of instituting the above directives.

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