



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

856 KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION / LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
Telephone (213) 974-4111 / FAX (213) 613-1739

HILDA L. SOLIS

CHAIR, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
SUPERVISOR, FIRST DISTRICT



March 8, 2021

Residents of West Covina
City of West Covina

Re: West Covina 2.23.21 Special City Council Meeting

Dear Concerned West Covina Residents,

I would like to begin by expressing my concern in light of the decision taken by the majority of the City Council at the Special Council Meeting held on Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 4 pm, to withdraw from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

COVID-19 has impacted communities across the nation, including the residents of West Covina, of which over 200 have died due to complications caused by COVID-19. That is why I have leveraged all resources possible to address the pandemic including:

- Establishing a COVID-19 testing site at Cameron Park
- Partnering with AltaMed to provide COVID-19 testing at their West Covina clinic
- Directing the Department of Public Health to provide vaccines to residents and staff of Bridgecreek Retirement Community
- Ensuring East Valley Community Clinic has the necessary supply to vaccinate West Covina residents who meet the state's eligibility criteria
- Allocating over \$1.3 million in direct county grant funding and technical support to City of West Covina small businesses, childcare centers, non-profits, and other entities through county COVID-19 relief programs

These are only some of my efforts to ensure access to both testing and vaccines to our residents in West Covina. I have also leveraged the use of county assets like the Pomona Fairplex as a mass testing and vaccination site, which has served many residents of West Covina. And as of March 1st, West Covina Unified School District, in partnership with Los Angeles County and Pomona Valley Medical Center, has begun vaccinating their educators and staff.

In fact, as of February 20, almost 15,976 or 18.5% of West Covina residents have been vaccinated in comparison to the 12% rate Countywide. I want to be clear: I will continue to ensure support and services for the residents of West Covina.

In light of this decision, like the only other municipal public health departments recognized by the State of California, Long Beach, Pasadena, and Berkeley, the City of West Covina will need to appoint its own health officer and provide sufficient infrastructure to operate a local health jurisdiction. State mandated public health operations, based on 17 CCR Section 1276, include: Public Health Statistics (recording of birth and death certificates); communicable disease control; medical and nursing services to promote maternal and child health; environmental health and sanitation services; laboratory services, and nutrition, chronic disease, social factors affecting health, public health nursing services, and occupational health services. In its agreement with cities, like West Covina, Los Angeles County's Department of Public Health (Public Health) currently provides all services required of a local health jurisdiction to those cities at no cost.

Per State law, once appointed, a city health officer must enforce and observe all orders, quarantine and other regulations concerning public health prescribed by the State Public Health Officer. During this last year, while acting as the health officer for the City, Public Health's Acute Communicable Disease Control Unit and Outbreak Management Bureau have investigated 45 COVID-19 outbreaks within the City to ensure isolation and quarantine measures are implemented, testing was conducted, and all infection control guidance was implemented. Further, Public Health's Environmental Health Division has conducted 660 inspections related to compliance with COVID-19 infection control requirements. This does not include the over 500 routine inspections of permitted businesses along with the mandated services and programs which include food, housing and institutions, land development, milk and dairy products, public pools, waste management, water supply, body art, and other services and programs as required by State or local laws.

The public health matters of one city have larger regional implications. It's my hope that even if the state approves West Covina's ability to move forward with establishing its own health department, the city will recognize that it needs to continue to work with surrounding cities, communities, and the County of Los Angeles to address the current and future public health needs of our shared constituency.

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Furthermore, it is alarming that the City is now proposing to establish its own public health department in the middle of a global pandemic and at a time when the city has been rated as one of the highest risk cities in the State, according to the most recent assessment issued by the State Auditor less than four months ago. Residents can read the audit here:
<https://www.auditor.ca.gov/pdfs/reports/2020-806.pdf>.

To that end, I have directed the Department of Public Health to convene a town hall to discuss the continuity of public health services for the residents of West Covina.

If you have any questions, please contact my East San Gabriel Valley Field Office at (909) 593-3661 or email FirstDistrict@bos.lacounty.gov.

Sincerely,



HILDA L. SOLIS
Supervisor, First District
Chair, Board of Supervisors