

From: [Erwin Tung](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: Comments on the Establishment of a City Health Department
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 3:40:37 PM

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To the City Council:

As a long-time resident, I must object in the strongest possible terms to the continued efforts to establish a health department for the City of West Covina at this time.

It is difficult to see how bootstrapping a local health department at this time is constructive to the priorities that lay before us as a community. We should be focusing on managing and controlling this pandemic with the resources we have available.

Starting a health department requires community feedback, expertise and logistical coordination that are difficult to justify for a city which declared a fiscal emergency less than a year ago and is currently has the dubious honor of being ranked as the 9th most at-risk city for bankruptcy in California by the state auditor.

I urge the City Council to table this discussion for now, there are better paths to take.

Respectfully,
Erwin Tung

From: [Karen Hong](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: new health department
Date: Saturday, April 3, 2021 4:23:42 PM

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To City Clerk,

We already pay LA County property taxes which pays for the LA County Health Department. They have been trying their best and are cooperating with the California Governor's guidelines to help us through this pandemic.

It will be very expensive to start up our own city health department and as tax payers we will end up paying twice.....once for the county health department and also for the city health department. Plus as a city we already have a large budget problem and whatever health department we try to start up would probably not be as good as the county's already is.

I think starting a West Covina Health Department is a bad idea all around.

Sincerely,
Karen Hong



From: [Bridgette Ramirez](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: Oral Communications - 4/4/21
Date: Sunday, April 4, 2021 2:03:49 PM

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I want to reiterate that I do not feel that creating our own health department is the right move for West Covina - at least not right now. The costs in time, energy, and, of course, financial resources would put a large strain on our city that is inappropriate for these times.

I also want to push for a HEAR Commission to be established to address hate crimes and racism in our community. These problems will not go away if we ignore them. We must all do our part as residents in our everyday lives to address racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, etc., but an officially designated commission would be an important official step that the city can take to publicly support marginalized communities.

Bridgette Ramirez

From: [Shahrzad Shishegar](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Council Meeting on 4/6/21
Date: Saturday, April 3, 2021 10:33:28 PM

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Dear City Council & Staff,

I am a 30 year WC resident and am very concerned about the direction the city is going and highly encourage you to rethink the decision you've made regarding discontinuing services with the LA County Health Department. There have been two meetings between the LA County Health Department and WC residents; one of which included officials from Sacramento. During these meetings, the myriad of services that the Health Dept. provides was described and it was eye-opening. I can't imagine how a small city such as ours will be able to offer similar services. I was also informed that WC would still be responsible for giving the County money as we do now! What?? And WC would still have to adhere to State regulations & mandates so not much would have changed for us had we had our own Health Department at the end of last year. We also learned that we would not be getting additional monies from the County through property taxes. So, we would be paying to establish a health department without any financial relief...at least from the County. I truly believe that we should abandon this effort and focus our energies on more important city functions.

But it does appear that 4 members of this council are bent on moving forward with this project... despite the city's financial woes and despite the strong opposition from its residents.

If the city does move forward with establishing its own health Department, I believe the hiring of a health director should involve a fair and thorough recruitment effort; complete with job postings and interviews. I know that Dr. Basil is vying for this position, but it is unfair practice to offer him the post without offering others the chance to compete.

Thank you for your consideration,

Shahrzad Shishegar

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: [Connie von Kohler](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: Public Comments: Concerns about City Public Health Department development
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 9:04:50 PM

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To: West Covina City Council

April 7, 2021 meeting

Dear Mayor Letty Lopez-Viado and City Council Members;

I am Connie von Kohler, I reside at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I am a Registered Nurse with a Public Health license, (this is an additional license that requires a Bachelor degree program to include public health). I have lived in West Covina for about 54 of my 66 years. My parents moved here when I was 2. I returned twice as an adult and have been here for the past 20 years.

I would like to ask the council to reconsider and abandon the process to develop a city public health department. I fail to see how spending time, energy and tax dollars to develop a city run independent health department will result in a benefit for all the citizens of West Covina. I wonder why this major change to services is moving forward and not first presented to the citizens to decide by an election.

I have followed the articles in the San Gabriel Valley Tribune. The **Sunday March 28, 2021 San Gabriel Valley Tribune** had two articles. **Headlines – Front page story: More health department funding sought:** City officials (Pasadena) seeking outside sources to increase services. Statinghistorically underfunded Pasadena Public Health Department. Pasadena has a larger population than West Covina and will always receive more funds. If Pasadena struggles with funding, how does the City Council think West Covina will have enough funds?

On page 3 the article: **Meeting to explore proposed city health care officer position set.** This article describes the one driver “disappointed by decisions such as the severe restrictions placed on restaurants during the peak of the pandemic...” We are presently in a worldwide health pandemic. No present-day health officials have had to deal with anything like this. Yes there have been other worldwide health issues, HIV, Ebola to name a few, but nothing in our lifetime like COVID-19. It’s a shame we as a society didn’t learn more from the 1918 pandemic, rather we act the same....refusing to wear masks, claiming our rights have been violated and how dare the health department / government impose on the citizens. This has been very difficult on lots of businesses not just restaurants and gyms. Many have found innovative ways to connect with clients / customers.

I recognize COVID-19 has added an additional challenge for restaurants in West Covina. Restaurants have difficulty surviving in this city during the best of times. I will spare you the long list I have seen come and go. But you do not make decisions to form a city health department based on one business type and an unprecedented pandemic.

If you follow the daily released data, Pasadena and Long Beach are often behind on their data. In the end, those two cities following the same restrictions as the county, state and national.

An article in the Tribune a few days later; **City's push for health agency is contested**, presents several citizens offering concerns and opposing the continued effort to split from the county. The points presented by my fellow citizens need to be seriously considered by the city council. As elected officials, you need to be making decisions that will benefit the citizens as a whole, not a few. I commend Brian Tabatabai, who represents the area where I live. He has spelled out a number of issues and seems to understand the complexity and cost of a health department.

I close by asking the city council to consider the needs of the citizens of West Covina, acknowledge what you can actually accomplish that will benefit the citizens and leave our health and well being to established health professionals. STOP the Plan to Split for LACoDPH.

Respectfully,

Connie von Köhler, MSN, RNC-OB, CPHQ

From: [Jaime Garcia](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: Oral Communications – 4/6/2021
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 11:44:45 PM

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Good evening Mayor and Members of the West Covina City Council

The Hospital Association of Southern California which represents 94 hospitals in Los Angeles County is opposed to your effort to establish a health department. Operating a public health department requires a serious financial investment – stable funding stream - that attracts top talent who are specialized in environmental health and infection prevention. This would include enforcing all health and safety regulations with the California Department of Public Health. Now is not the time during a pandemic to undermine the work and service that is currently provided to residents of West Covina, its businesses and health care providers.

Jaime Garcia

Regional Vice President – Los Angeles

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