



BARBARA FERRER, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.Ed.
Director

MUNTU DAVIS, M.D., M.P.H.
County Health Officer

MEGAN McCLAIRES, M.S.P.H.
Chief Deputy Director

313 North Figueroa Street, Room 806
Los Angeles, California 90012
TEL (213) 288-8117 • FAX (213) 975-1273

www.publichealth.lacounty.gov



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February 23, 2021

The Honorable Letty Lopez-Viado
City of West Covina
City Hall Council Chambers
1444 W. Garvey Avenue South
West Covina, California 91790

Re: Resolution 2021-15 and Urgency Ordinance No. 2476

Dear Mayor and Honorable West Covina City Councilmembers:

This is to provide you with comment regarding the Council's decision to consider the public health services agreement between the County and the City of West Covina, which has been in place and working well at no cost to the City for decades. Although it is well within a city's jurisdiction to create its own public health department, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) is not aware of any planning or coordination with the City for this drastic change. Public Health is concerned that even if the City has made plans to create and operationalize the infrastructure necessary to run an effective public health department, there are significant hurdles to ensuring to protection of the health of the city's residents.

Like the only other municipal public health departments recognized by the State of California, Long Beach, Pasadena, and Berkeley, the City 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 § 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 agreements with cities, like West Covina, Public Health 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


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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.

Should this council elect to create its own city public health department, Public Health will be ready to work with the City to transfer all of the duties of a local public health jurisdiction. Until that transition is complete and the City's public health department is recognized by the State as a local public health jurisdiction, Public Health will continue to serve this council and the residents of West Covina in its current capacity.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please let me know.

Sincerely,


Muntu Davis, M.D., M.P.H.
County Health Officer

MD:rr