

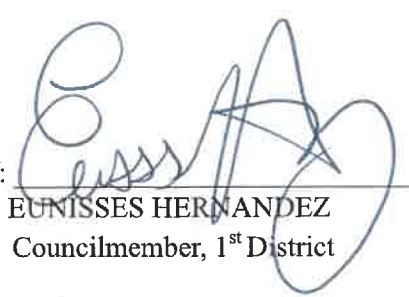
MOTION

Despite over ninety percent of the United States population having some form of health insurance, medical debt remains a crucial public health issue in Los Angeles County (County). The impact of medical debt is widespread, causing financial, mental, and physical distress for patients who may have difficulty affording the basic necessities like food and housing and may delay necessary medical treatments, especially when these expenses are not covered by insurance and patients are unaware of or denied financial assistance. Currently, there is no public data on medical debt collection activities. Existing financial assistance data reported to the State and federal agencies is very limited and only includes the sum of total dollars of financial assistance provided. No operational metrics such as the number of applications, denial rates, or reasons for denials are reported, making it unknown who missed qualifying for financial assistance.

On October 3, 2023, the County Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted a motion that directed the Department of Public Health (DPH) to work with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA), and County Counsel to develop an ordinance to require the collection of data and policies on debt and financial assistance activities from hospitals operating in the County. Over the course of a year, the DPH led extensive discussions and collected feedback from members of the LA Coalition on Medical Debt, individual hospitals, the Hospital Association of Southern California (HASC), and other jurisdictions collecting similar data. At its September 10, 2024 meeting, the Board adopted the "Addressing Medical Debt through Data Collection" ordinance. Incorporated cities within the County, such as the City of Los Angeles must adopt the ordinance to cover their jurisdiction. The ordinance establishes that the DPH has the authority to enforce violations of this ordinance at no cost to cities who have adopted the enabling ordinance. The collection of aggregate data is critical for directly preventing medical debt among those eligible for assistance.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council request the City Attorney to prepare and present an enabling ordinance incorporating Los Angeles County Code, sections 11.02.085 through 11.41.045, Ordinance entitled "Addressing Medical Debt Through Data Collection," as amended by Los Angeles County Ordinance 2024-0048 to authorize the County's Department of Public Health to collect and publish data and policies on debt collection and financial assistance activities from hospitals operating in the City in a manner consistent with its actions in the County of Los Angeles.

PRESENTED BY:


EUNISSES HERNANDEZ
Councilmember, 1st District

SECONDED BY:



ORIGINAL


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