

Communication from Public

Name: Kerry Morrison

Date Submitted: 10/06/2020 10:55 AM

Council File No: 20-0769-S2

Comments for Public Posting: I offer my support for this motion presented by Councilmembers O'Farrell and Martinez. There needs to be a more coordinated response between the county and the city with respect to the health needs of people experiencing homelessness in this city. The county is responsible for providing mental health services, substance abuse treatment, public health guidance and health interventions. Recent neighborhood surveys in Hollywood documents that people are frustrated at the number of people wandering the streets with untreated mental illness and there does not appear to be a coordinated response. The incidence of meth addiction seems higher than in previous years, but we are unaware of any coordinated approach to substance abuse intervention, rehab and/or recovery programs. People who are severely gravely disabled -- unable to care for their basic needs and often not even aware of the extent of their illness or disease -- are left to die on our streets. I believe our county department of public health has done yeoman's work in preparing and communicating around Covid response -- but it is confusing why the mayor of Los Angeles (which is one city of 88 in the county) would be providing regular briefings for something that is arguably a county responsibility. I think the public is confused about who does what in these spheres. In the past, I was not in favor of the city taking on health functions, but my opinion is changing. Other cities, where there is a unification of traditional city/county responsibilities in one entity (e.g., New York, San Francisco, Denver) seem to have a greater level of success and accountability to the public. Long Beach also has its own health agency. I would hope the CAO would research if outcomes are better when a more coordinated approach is used. Right now -- it is impossible to know who to contact -- or hold accountable -- in the county of Los Angeles for what we see on our streets: a meth epidemic with no end in sight, barefoot people in rags wandering our streets suffering from serious mental illness, people struggling with a substance use addiction or mental illness released from jail with no place to go. I look forward to this report.