

MOTION

According to the most recent Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) “point-in-time” homeless count (2020), Los Angeles County is home to over 66,000 people experiencing homelessness (PEH). The City of Los Angeles accounts for the majority of that, with over 41,000 people living within the city limits, 62% or nearly two-thirds of the accounted for population. Earlier this year, Los Angeles County’s Department of Public Health released a comprehensive report titled: “Trends in Mortality Rates and Causes-of-Death Among People Experiencing Homelessness, January 2021”, showing that death caused by drug overdose continues to rise, and is the leading cause of death year over year, among people experiencing homelessness. The report details that in the combined years of 2017-2019, people experiencing homelessness were *36 times more likely* to die of a drug overdose than people in the general LA County population.

The reality is alarming. The report notes that between January - July 2020, 273 people died as a result of an overdose; in the same month to month period for 2019, there were 205 deaths - a 33% increase. In addition, the increased dependent use of opioids, and methamphetamines often laced with fentanyl, has added to the mental health crisis. In fact, the first set of recommendations in the 2021 Los Angeles County Public Health report is very clear, “Enhance the reach, depth and quality of multidisciplinary team services for PEH...establishing trust, offering interim housing, with an explicit focus on reaching Black and Latinx PEH...and extending harm reduction approaches to substance use disorder (SUD) and mental health treatment”. The City should play a greater role due to the magnitude of the crisis.

Homelessness is the number one issue in the city; what is our collective, and municipal government’s role? For nearly 60 years, all health service delivery has been administered by Los Angeles County. Contract C-32683 (1964), as amended, is the principle document outlining the delivery of public health and mental health services for all residents within the City of Los Angeles, operated and staffed by the County of LA. As of today, this 57-year old contract governs the delivery of all health services to LA City residents, minus Medicare and Medicaid. The City has amended the agreement twice before, and can do so again.

Motion CF: 20-0769-S2 was adopted in October of 2020, instructing a review of county public and mental health departments and agencies. The motion resulted in a partnership with the United Way of Los Angeles and People’s Health Solutions, where an analysis of the functions, delivery methods and systems in place for public health and mental health was done from the perspective of the City’s residents. The results confirmed the present day situation: since 1964, the city has had a contract for health services with the County of LA, but no clear method of evaluating the delivery of those services, nor a method for the city to communicate clear and concise goals to the County with respect to healthcare services for all Angelenos, especially people experiencing homelessness. In fact, this arrangement already has shown some deficiencies, as evident by the 1990s lawsuit against LA County by the City which resulted in the creation of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA). Updating this contractual agreement is the right policy move and is the next logical step after the city and its residents invested so clearly and thoroughly by adopting ballot initiatives H and HHH.

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The need is clear throughout Los Angeles. Services, help and offering a path to wellness for people are priorities for Angelenos. Today, the delivery of health services is visibly insufficient, especially in relation to the neglect of people experiencing homelessness. Now is the time for Council to amend the original instruction in CF: 20-0769-S2, and zero in on mental health and substance abuse issues that go untreated in encampments across the city.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Council INSTRUCT the City Administrative Officer and the Chief Legislative Analyst to report on the findings in CF: 20-0769-S2, including a review of the LA City contractual relationship with LA County for the delivery of healthcare services, detailed in contract C-32683 (as amended), with specific recommendations for the City to improve the delivery of healthcare services to all Angelenos, starting first with people experiencing homelessness, including but not limited to:

- Models and options for a City position or office to monitor and evaluate County health programs, especially as it relates to people experiencing homelessness
- Recommendations to improve the public process for healthcare service delivery, including public oversight of the functions described in the body of this motion, focusing first on the delivery of all healthcare services to and for people experiencing homelessness, including shelter and housing, nutrition, health, substance abuse and assistance, and mental health services
- Recommendations to renegotiate contract C-32683 to better represent the City's residents, focusing on people experiencing homelessness, including citywide current and ongoing health needs
- A clear and concise method for the City to organize, prioritize, evaluate and then communicate those needs on a regular basis to LA County health departments or any future agencies tasked with enforcing the public health code

Presented By: _____


MITCH O'FARRELL

Councilmember, 13th District

Seconded By: _____

