



Date: August 2, 2016  
To: Honorable Mayor, Councilpersons Lena Gonzalez, Suzie Price, Stacy Mungo and other Members of the City Council  
Subject: Long Beach Meningitis Public Outreach Update

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Good evening.

My name is Ace Robinson. I am a resident of the City of Long Beach in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District. I serve as the Executive Director of the C.A.R.E. Program at Dignity Health – St. Mary Medical Center. For the past 30 years, C.A.R.E. – or the Comprehensive AIDS Resource & Education program—has addressed the medical and social needs of People Living with HIV.

Entities, such as C.A.R.E., that primarily serve People Living with HIV historically and presently serve people who are often co-infected with other bacterial and viral diseases due to their compromised immune systems. Therefore, diseases that are normally rare can often become more prevalent in their social communities even if their friends or loved ones do not also live with HIV.

Due to the recent outbreak of meningitis in Los Angeles County, inclusive of Long Beach, C.A.R.E.'s clientele must be highly diligent to ensure that meningitis does not infect more people without hindrance. They not only rely on the CARE Program, but the Mayor, City Council, and the Department of Public Health to support them. HIV disproportionately impacts gay and bisexual men, thus due to the higher rates of co-infection for People Living with HIV, then meningitis also disproportionately impacts gay and bisexual men—such as me.

In order to accomplish the shared goals of the Long Beach Department of Health & Human Services and Members of the City Council, C.A.R.E. fully supports the Councilmembers recommendation to receive and file a report from the Health & Human Services Department on their outreach and response to the recent outbreak of meningitis. On behalf of C.A.R.E., we also recommend:

- A thorough review of the amount of culturally-tailored outreach to communities disproportionately impacted by meningitis
  - People Living with HIV
  - Gay/Bisexual Men
  - Street-involved Persons
  - Active Drug Users
- Resources allocated to deliver culturally-competent and medically-accurate information to communities at-risk for meningitis

CARE is committed to providing the competent and timely care to all vulnerable populations and looks forward to your support. Thank you for your time and attention.