

MAYE (Meditation Agriculture Yoga Education)

2153 East Anaheim Street
Long Beach, California 90814

February 1, 2021

Mayor Robert Garcia and
Members of the Long Beach City Council
411 West Ocean Blvd, 11th Floor
Long Beach, California 90802

Re: Equity Issues in the City of Long Beach's COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout

Dear Mayor Garcia and all Councilmembers:

As one of the primary organizations serving Long Beach's Cambodian population, we at the MAYE Center have been watching the City's rollout of the coronavirus vaccinations and gauging the effect on our Cambodian population.

First, we greatly appreciate and acknowledge the tremendous efforts by you and City staff in emergency conditions with not enough resources, to create and deliver the many thousand vaccinations of Long Beach residents thus far.

Nonetheless, we are very concerned about whether the rollout is proceeding equitably as it affects our most needy populations including most Cambodians who are seniors and who largely lack the level of language skill, computer proficiency and transportation demanded by the way the roll out is occurring.

As you know this population emigrated to Long Beach in the late 1970's to escape the Khmer Rouge genocide and its aftermath. One think the Khmer Rouge did in their control of the government is to abolish or dismantle the education system in Cambodia. As a result, many Cambodian seniors are not literate in any language. This population is mostly in the age group which should be accessing appointments now under the City's priority system. But they can't.

In our experience, to actually get an appointment, one has had to continuously monitor the website. This presupposes that all have fulltime access to computers, the proficiency and high English skills needed to navigate web pages, the knowledge and ability to scan and upload documents and the facility to compete in real time with native English speakers who are also desperately trying to get appointments themselves.

The fact that the City now offers telephone communication in Khmer, Spanish and Tagalog is laudable but not yet available for appointment notification. To register online for an appointment, one must still navigate through the English process to get there. Once they click on the button to access the Khmer application, they are again confronted not with the application in Khmer but with the English application. They must then know and understand that they are to go to the top right options without instruction and scroll until they find the Khmer language option. Why in the world does our system require this additional step when all that needs to be done is to create a direct link from the Khmer language option to the Khmer translation?

We have participated over the past two years in the City's drive to instill equity in all facets of City life. Our community - as we expect is true in segments of the Hispanic and African American communities - simply cannot compete at this level. We are being left out or at least disadvantaged in this literally life or death process as presently constructed. There need to be options.

The City is now collecting resident information and promises to let people know when appointments are available. While this will help, it does not address the language, literacy, transportation and mobility barriers that are preventing participation at scale in communities for whom English is not the native language or who lack English, computer equipment and proficiency and/or transportation.

We would also like to see data on how many people from each Council District and zip code are receiving vaccinations. We as a City need to know this information to gauge the success or failure of our efforts to date as regards equity. In a perfect system, the number would be the same for each Council District.

There are several measures that the City could take to mitigate the inequities we have seen thus far. Some providers, like Kedren Hospital in South Central, are offering different access options. For example, giving shots at locations where these hard-to-serve and transportation-challenged people congregate and are familiar with. Either provide bilingual bicultural staff or give organizations funding to publicize, coordinate and administer vaccinations at locations such as MAYE Center and UCC for the Cambodian population, Centro Cha for the Latinx and Filipino Migrant Center for Filipinos and various community sites in the Sixth District for those African-American residents who need help. Look at the VAXLB website from the perspective of someone who is not fluent in English or cannot read in any language to minimize the burden on non-native English speakers. Have a mobile vaccination unit that makes announced community stops in the hard-to-serve population areas and fund community groups to handle appointments and coordination of days when the mobile unit is there.

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There needs to be some kind of advisory group or task force to ensure that equity permeates all aspects of the vaccine distribution on an ongoing basis given the daily changes. We and many other competent members of the most at-risk communities are willing to serve due to the life or death importance of this effort.

Sincerely,

s/Laura Som

Laura Som

Executive Director MAYE Center

s/Alex J. Norman

Dr. Alex J. Norman

Program Board Chair MAYE Center

s/Marc Coleman

Marc Coleman

Treasurer/Secretary MAYE Center Program Board

From: Kathleen ODaniels [mailto:kcodaniels@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 2, 2021 2:40 PM
To: CityClerk <CityClerk@longbeach.gov>
Subject: Overlooked Covid vector for Covid Study Session Feb 2, 2021

-EXTERNAL-

An overlooked method of Covid transmission is in the hand-to-mouth path in certain smoking practices such as in vaping and hookah using. When using these methods smokers, especially youth, share the instruments they smoke with. This creates a perfect vector for Covid and other viruses to spread through that population. Flavoring is a well- researched factor in drawing youth to smoking. Combine that with Covid risk and you have the prescription for disaster.

We in the Tobacco Free Coalition of Long Beach urge the City Council to **include a prohibition against flavored tobacco products and the vaping equipment in the Covid plan** in order to stem that pernicious vector and minimize Covid risk to youth.

Here's further information: <https://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2020/08/vaping-linked-to-covid-19-risk-in-teens-and-young-adults.html>

Kathleen ODaniels M.P.H., member, Tobacco Free Coalition of Long Beach

From: Raman Vasishth [mailto:RamanV@Charter.net]

Sent: Tuesday, February 2, 2021 3:05 PM

To: CityClerk <CityClerk@longbeach.gov>; Council District 1 <District1@longbeach.gov>; Council District 2 <District2@longbeach.gov>; Council District 3 <District3@longbeach.gov>; Council District 4 <District4@longbeach.gov>; Council District 5 <District5@longbeach.gov>; Council District 6 <District6@longbeach.gov>; Council District 7 <District7@longbeach.gov>; Council District 8 <District8@longbeach.gov>; Council District 9 <District9@longbeach.gov>; Stacy Mungo <Stacy.Mungo@longbeach.gov>; Tom Modica <Tom.Modica@longbeach.gov>

Subject: Covid 19 Study Session

-EXTERNAL-

Hello City Clerk,

I would appreciate your help in adding this e-mail and included attachment to the Covid-19 study session roll out prior to the meeting.

I and residents I've spoken with are primarily concerned that Seniors, particularly those with Pre-existing conditions, are being discriminated against. It appears they were held back when they should have been prioritized well ahead and put in line well before of the LBUSD came into the picture. The city then ignored seniors and proceeded to fastrack 1500 vaccine shots to the LBUSD over the most needy who were legitimately trying to get a place in line and should have rightfully been and were shut out the city. The city had done nothing to make them whole and in-fact compounded the problem by fast tracking LBUSD. The city was also supposed to use the LBUSD vaccines for 2nd doses for seniors they by forcing vaccines to be delivered our of CDC recommendations if new shipments don't come in time. Residents have also provided me a list of other issued they would like the city to resolve and address to get them back their rightful place in line.

I don't

Warmest Regards,

Raman Vasishth
Neighborhood Leadership Program, 2019
Long Beach Resident

To: LBC Council

From Raman

Subject: Covid-19 Study Session City Council meeting dated 2/22/21

I'm sorry for the haphazard format of this document as I put this together on short notice:

Vaccination concerning/ alarming Residents after speaking to primarily seniors, caregivers and doctors:

- 1) City deliberately not staffing the phone bank to give eligible seniors an opportunity to get a vaccine or even a ranking to get a place in line and provide any metrics. Either by e-mail or phone. In spite of over 20K questions and e-mails, the city has not changed its policy to make seniors whole and prevent Education groups leapfrogging over them.
- 2) City not reserving 2nd dose inventory for seniors.
- 3) While claiming the seniors the primary concern in delivering the vaccine, giving LBUSD and separate but better delivery system that fast tracks them ahead of seniors still trying to get an appointment date since 1/14/21
- 4) **What appears to be age discrimination** : The City then turning around and giving LBUSD employees 1500 doses by 1/25/21 whose are at no greater risk than the General population. Thereby removing 2nd doses to seniors who were being told their 2nd doses were always the primary concern of the city. And LBUSD are getting preferred treatment over seniors who have been trying to get into the vaccination system since 1/14 and being locked out. **All this while the City has done nothing to help seniors with PREEXISTING Conditions.**
- 5) A major cause of friction among the public is including the LBUSD with the groups that are most at risk. That group has powerful lobby's that just needs to wait a few week or a month until the Seniors who are actually the most at risk. We as humans must make sacrifices for those at most need for vaccinations. We cannot give in to political desires or anxieties of the education groups that want to climb over those most at risk or in need.
- 6) There's no data in people waiting 6 weeks for a vaccine or recommendation to do it, yet the city's elected officials continue to publish it. In this area, the public appears more knowledgeable than the city.
- 7) There's no basis in Councilmembers saying that the CDC recommend waiting and longer than 21 days for Pfizer's & 28 days for Moderna vaccines, that they publish.
- 8) Many residents feel, by denying seniors are being swept to the side. They have no ability to reserve a space when vaccination arrives. And getting disheartened when they hear the LBUSD has leapfrogged over them. Public trust and confidence in the city is rapidly diminishing as the people we love most are being swept to the side and put further at risk.
- 9) As far as we know, the Guard is shipping out 1 million doses a day as it promised. The vaccine shortage problem does not appear relate to supply but rather not reserving enough vaccines for 2nd doses and giving away & fastracking 1500 doses to LBUSD (none of whom are at risk) over

seniors were already waiting in line and others that were forced into a known bottleneck process that forced them out.

- 10) Metrics: The city and health dept not turning over metrics of each group vaccinated with first doses, 2nd doses and the backed numbers and with vaccine delivery and Storage counts for 2nd doses. No mention of how many of those vaccinated are seniors and how many are backlog and also cannot get into the system.
- 11) Confusion over the city new term Prioritizing 2nd dosages. What precisely does that involve and what are the procedures.
- 12) Health department telling residents not to e-mail them via e-mail. The same e-mail elected officials asked them to use.
- 13) Those most in need of the vaccine are being abused and vaccines that should be devoted to them are being withheld and being kept out of the program that should be primarily devoted to them during this stage.
- 14) Many residents are saying this appears to be an attack on humanity ...God will be your judge.

Discrimination among Seniors: on 1/14/21: All Seniors should have been able to make appointments or get a priory number to get their place in line for Covid-19 vaccinations. But the City by refusing to properly man the help desk phone lines and e-mail processing, essentially prevented/block all but a few seniors from gaining access. At that time the LBUSD was not in line to get vaccines. In spite of getting over 20K questions and likely more complaints, the city refused to properly man the Health desk to assume scheduling for intake and prioritizing Seniors for waiting until enough vaccines can in to accommodate them.

All Seniors in the city that wanted the vaccine should have been either been giving appointments for both their first and 2nd shots or received a priority number for waiting their turn in line. The city's refusals to fully man the health desk created a bottleneck the literally prevented seniors for accessing the system.

Meanwhile, weeks later the LBUSD was approved for getting the vaccines. Although LBUSD had no physical reason or underlying heath conditions, and because Seniors were blocked from accessing the system; the city instead of putting the LBUSD behind Seniors as they should have, instead gave LBUSD 1500 vaccination **under the RADAR** through a faster parallel that not only enabled younger & healthier LBUSD employees to get earlier appointments, but vaccines in a few days and bypass the bottlenecks the city created for seniors. Seniors could not access that same system.

The question remains: **Why was LBUSD allowed to get 1500 employees vaccinated by 1/25/21 when Seniors were not allowed to do so and had been trying from 1/14?** Answer, the city worked with the LBUSD to fasttrack and bypass bottlenecks they put in holding back seniors.

The city has apparently agreed to give a total of 12K vaccines to the LBUSD while Seniors must wait in limbo. Any way you look at this, this is discrimination against seniors and the city, by doing this is literally putting the highest priority risk groups on hold while it tries to force through the LBUSD that wants it regardless of what impact their access has on the greater good of humanity. They and the city

do not seem to care if a senior may die if they don't get the vaccination as long as they, who are not at a greater risk of getting Covid get the vaccine they desire it now and at any costs.

By temporarily stopping the LBUSD from getting vaccination (for a short time) and enabling Seniors to go through as the laws were intended, LBUSD will only have to wait a few weeks or a month and then get the entire district vaccination at once with no ill effects on the education system as the LBUSD are not equipped to taken in students currently. In truth LBUSD should first a plan ratify a plan to do that anyways and have the district ready prior to receiving the vaccination anyways. By that time, the Seniors should be through unless the city continue to block prioritizing seniors for which vaccines are not yet available.

Seniors (those most at risk) should be top priority: The general consensus of public is the city is to completely take care of the most needy as the primary group to assist. This means temporarily stopping (for a short time) the LBUSD and other groups from getting vaccinations ahead of them or at the same time with the exception of first responders, health care & food service until the seniors and most at need can get their vaccinations. And the city needs to set aside 50% of the vaccinations for 2nd shots. The healthcare support desk needs to get fully staffed. Nobody understands why that has not happened from day 1. Seniors left out of the system need to be given a priority number. Once that period is over, the education groups should be allowed to follow.

Resident Perception: That a simple job of getting out vaccines based on supply and to prioritize the most needy is not being done and actually being blocked by the city. Common complaints by residents is the city has refused to any metrics, no transparency, denying seniors from be given a priority number before LBUSD got involved is against a major narrative the city is pushing.

Availability of 2nd doses: As far as the public can tell, the National Guard is delivering 1 million vaccinations daily as was promised. LBC claims of true shortages in vaccines maybe due to California State distribution and local planning or lack of it.

To ensure vaccination delivery was given to all the needy people, all the city had to do was set aside 50% of the vaccines it had for 2nd doses. Each time a new shipment comes in, you move out the 2nd dose supply to use for the 1st dose and the new supply replaces the inventory for the 2nd doses. If you are shipped less, fewer 1 doses go out, if it's more, more first doses go out and a greater supply of 2nd doses are built in the same way.

According to Councilmembers, the Health Dept and News in varying degrees, the city has created its own shortages by handing out too many 1st doses and giving away 1500 vaccines to the LBUSD.

Regardless of how you phrase it, virtually all senior residents not able to receive the 2nd doses within the true recommended dates will be very concerned. This is particularly true among seniors with underlying conditions such as cancer and those with low immunity.

City Semantics: The city developed 2 groups it called Seniors and deliberately used them interchangeably in a form of semantics to make the public think, getting vaccines to that age group was its primary mission. The fear is the city is interchanging the 2 senior groups that's 65+

City refusal to provide transparent metrics: Having backdoor systems that favor one group over another in gaining access, refusal to turn over information on vaccine information on all categories groups like Seniors that have received vaccination and their appointments and backlogged applicants waiting for vaccinations as well as how vaccinations that arrived and in storage for 2nd doses all help ensure transparency, reduce panic and accountability. At this time, nobody knows if the number of seniors process is greater to or less than the LBUSD.

Why has CD 5 been excluded from having a vaccination point?

Question to the City: Residents are notices more Buzz words coming out as city talking points that they want defined like telling residents it's "**prioritizing 2nd doses**" **What does that process entail specifically?** This is causing further worry when the Seniors say they were told by the health department and city own website says they needed to get their doses within 21 & 28 days. *This is confusing and the public wants the city to provide a definition of what that code speak.*

I've attached two moving articles by the LB Report that sum up the potential loss of human life and if other special interest groups such as the LBUSD and refusing to plan for 2nd doses at this stage:

[Nat'l Vaccine Shortage + Outcome Of Mayor Garcia Vax Policy = No LB First Vaccine Doses In February and Possibly March \(lbreport.com\)](#)

[City Bent COVID-19 Vaccine Rules To Let LB Mayor, Councilmembers Get Vaccinations Ahead of Prioritized Others \(lbreport.com\)](#)

Warmest Regards,

Raman Vasishth
Neighborhood Leadership Project, 2019
LBC Resident