



Date: April 2, 2019

To: Honorable Mayor Robert Garcia and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Rex Richardson, Ninth District *RR*
Councilmember Roberto Uranga, Seventh District *(R)*

Subject: Access to Acute Care Services and Facilities

RECOMMENDATION:

Request the City Manager to work with the appropriate departments to report back on potential incentives and strategies to expand access to quality urgent care in neighborhoods with limited access to an acute care facility in Long Beach.

Discussion

Acute care is rapid, secondary intervention, in which, a patient receives short-term treatment for a non-life-threatening injury, illness, or medical condition. Urgent care centers are an emerging sector within the healthcare field that provide patients with great convenience: affordable costs, evening and weekend hours, and shorter wait times.

The scope of urgent care services is broad, often overlapping with any other medical specialty that involves direct patient care. In fact, urgent medicine practitioners can care for any patient, regardless of age, with any complaint, much like emergency medical services. Acute care, however, differs from emergency medicine, as the former provides immediate medical attention, most commonly to lower acuity patients. Urgent care conditions are instances that require professional attention but would not result in further disability or death if the patient is not immediately treated. Such conditions can include: allergic reaction, nausea, back pain, rash, wounds/lacerations, sprains/strains, to name a few.

About 40 percent of patients who visit hospital emergency rooms have conditions that do not require high-level emergency care. Consequently, emergency departments experience overcrowding and extensive wait times. This overcrowding also has an impact on our medical emergency response times within our Fire Department. Most urgent care centers have the staffing, equipment, space, and other resources necessary to treat lower acuity patients, which could contribute to decompression of hospital emergency departments.



As we explore opportunities to enhance community-based healthcare, such as short-term intervention and delivery alternatives, we should consider exploring and incentivizing the expansion of urgent care facilities in the neighborhoods that are not near urgent care medical facilities.

This matter was reviewed by Budget Manager Grace H. Yoon on March 22, 2019.

Fiscal Impact

This recommendation requests a report on potential incentives and strategies to expand access to quality urgent care in neighborhoods with limited access to an acute care facility in Long Beach. If given sufficient time, preparing this report is anticipated to require a moderate level of staff hours beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and is expected to have a moderate impact on existing City Council priorities due to strain on staff capacity and balancing against other priorities. If a more aggressive timeframe is expected, the impact on staff time and existing City Council priorities would be significant. Any additional fiscal impact of incentives or strategies identified will be included in the requested report.

Hospitals, Urgent Cares, and Fire Stations by Council District Long Beach, CA

