

November 9, 2021

Long Beach City Council
411 W Ocean Blvd
Long Beach, CA 90802

Agenda Item #45

Dear Honorable Mayor Robert Garcia and members of the City Council:

I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Science at California State University, Long Beach and Coordinator of the Black Health Equity Collaborative. I am writing in **“Support”** of Council agenda item #45, **“Localizing Mental Health Services in Long Beach.”**

Item #45 directs the Department of Development Services to the City Manager to work with the Department of Health and Human Services and local mental health providers to explore the feasibility of establishing a more robust infrastructure for mental health services.

Mental health is a significant issue in Long Beach, and the COVID-19 pandemic has made matters worse. Long Beach saw over 1,000 more mental health-related 911 calls in 2020 than in 2019. The share of adults experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression ballooned from 11% to 32%. Long Beach's suicide and drug overdose rates are already well above the county average, and the City's rate of emergency room visits due to mental health issues is twice the state average. More than half of Long Beach's over 2,000 residents experiencing homelessness struggle with mental health issues. All these problems reveal a situation that should be treated as the public health crisis that it is – a crisis that deserves a proportionate response.

The Long Beach Racial Equity and Reconciliation Initiative calls on Long Beach to “increase investment in mental health and trauma services, including facilities, professionals, community responses, and culturally tailored resources.” Black communities face especially high rates of mental stress and psychological trauma, especially during the intersection of heightened racial tensions and the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, accessible mental health providers and services continue to be a necessity for underinsured and noninsured within the Black community.

There is a continued need to strengthen the availability and relevance of quality mental health services, access and availability to Black residents. Developing a robust infrastructure for mental health services can increase the awareness of available mental health services, better determine how to access it, and provide the ground work for culturally relevant mental health service delivery. We believe that an innovative model different from traditional county mental health centers could be established that could serve a mixed clientele of fee for service clients, low income, insurance, and crisis intervention.

As we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, delivering a proportionate response to the mental health epidemic requires that we fully integrate our service network by localizing our approach to addressing mental health issues. The trauma experienced from civil unrest and COVID-19 will be continue to manifest as we go through this period. Better coordinating the many different arms of Long Beach's mental health services apparatus will be vital for address mental health disparities among Black residents. This already existing local infrastructure will serve as an excellent foundation to support our efforts to tackle this crisis.

For these reasons, Long Beach should work together with local partners, including Black serving mental health providers, and the County of Los Angeles to explore more innovate localized collaborative approaches to mental health. As a city that recognizes the need to treat mental and physical healthcare as equivalent, there are far too many of our community members who fall through the cracks of our

mental healthcare system. We are looking forward to starting the initial discussions on how to build a more robust infrastructure for mental health services in Long Beach.

For these reasons, I support Council agenda item 45 and request an **“Aye”** vote on this important agenda item. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Amber Johnson at amber.johnson@csulb.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amber Johnson", with a stylized, cursive script.

Dr. Amber Johnson
Assistant Professor & Black Health Equity Collaborative Coordinator
Department of Health Science
California State University, Long Beach
Amber.Johnson@csulb.edu

From: Uduak-Joe Ntuk [mailto:untuk@lbcc.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, November 9, 2021 10:22 AM
To: CityClerk <CityClerk@longbeach.gov>
Cc: Rex Richardson <Rex.Richardson@longbeach.gov>
Subject: LBCC Letter of Support - Item #45

-EXTERNAL-

November 9, 2021

Long Beach City Council
411 W Ocean Blvd.
Long Beach, CA 90802

Support Agenda Item #45

Dear Honorable Mayor Robert Garcia and members
of the City Council:

On behalf of Long Beach City College, I am writing
in “**Support**” of Council agenda item #45,
“**Localizing Mental Health Services in Long
Beach.**”

Item #45 directs the Department of Development
Services to the City Manager to work with the
Department of Health and Human Services and local
mental health providers to explore the feasibility of
establishing a more robust infrastructure for mental
health services.

Mental health is a significant issue in Long Beach City
College service area, and the COVID-19 pandemic
has made matters worse. Long Beach saw over 1,000
more mental health-related 911 calls in 2020 than in
2019. The share of adults experiencing symptoms of
anxiety or depression ballooned from 11% to 32%.

Long Beach's suicide and drug overdose rates are already well above the county average, and the City's rate of emergency room visits due to mental health issues is twice the state average. More than half of Long Beach's over 2,000 residents experiencing homelessness struggle with mental health issues. All these problems reveal a situation that should be treated as the public health crisis that it is – a crisis that deserves a proportionate response.

Although Long Beach has its own Health Department, the City's mental health services are under the purview of Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. The County directly provides or contracts with local providers to provide a full array of services, but in many instances, the service planning and implementation is not in coordination with the City or local providers to ensure people in need of mental health supports don't fall through the cracks. At the same time, the role of local government has been expanding in recent years. As we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, delivering a proportionate response to the mental health epidemic requires that we fully integrate our service network by localizing our approach to addressing mental health issues. Long Beach already has its own prosecutor, health department, dispatch center, police, and fire departments. Better coordinating the many different arms of Long Beach's mental health services apparatus is vital – this already existing local infrastructure will serve as an excellent foundation to support our efforts to tackle this crisis.

The Long Beach Racial Equity and Reconciliation Initiative calls on Long Beach to “increase investment in mental health and trauma services, including facilities, professionals, community responses, and culturally tailored resources.” As we

acknowledge communities of color face especially high rates of mental illness and psychological trauma, especially in the aftermath of COVID-19, moving towards more locally tailored outreach and service provision can help reduce these inequities.

For these reasons, Long Beach should work together with local partners and the County of Los Angeles to explore more innovative localized collaborative approaches to mental health. As a city that recognizes the need to treat mental and physical healthcare as equivalent, asymmetries in program administration between city and county services allow far too many to fall through the cracks of our mental healthcare system, and we support this proposal because it will serve as a starting point from which to build the more robust infrastructure Long Beach so badly needs.

For these reasons, I support Council agenda item 45 and respectfully request an “**Aye**” vote on this important agenda item. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Mike Muñoz at (562) 938-4111.

Sincerely,

Uduak-Joe Ntuk

President, LBCCD Board of Trustees

November 9, 2021

Long Beach City Council
411 W Ocean Blvd
Long Beach, CA 90802
Re: Agenda Item #45

Dear Honorable Mayor Robert Garcia and members of the City Council:

On behalf of Century Villages at Cabrillo, I am writing in “Support” of Council agenda item #45, “Localizing Mental Health Services in Long Beach.”

Item #45 directs the Department of Development Services to the City Manager to work with the Department of Health and Human Services and local mental health providers to explore the feasibility of establishing a more robust infrastructure for mental health services.

Mental health is a significant issue in Long Beach, and the COVID-19 pandemic has made matters worse. Long Beach saw over 1,000 more mental health-related 911 calls in 2020 than in 2019. The share of adults experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression ballooned from 11% to 32%. Long Beach’s suicide and drug overdose rates are already well above the county average, and the City’s rate of emergency room visits due to mental health issues is twice the state average. More than half of Long Beach’s over 2,000 residents experiencing homelessness struggle with mental health issues. All these problems reveal a situation that should be treated as the public health crisis that it is – a crisis that deserves a proportionate response.

Century Villages at Cabrillo is a community partner providing low-income, permanent supportive housing to individuals, families, and Veterans in Long Beach. Many of our families receive case management, mental health support, advocacy, financial literacy, career development, parenting, and other life-changing services. We see firsthand the impact of mental health services have in addressing the behavioral health needs that show up as hurdles for stable housing. Likewise, we know such services increase positive physical and emotional outcomes.

Although Long Beach has its own Health Department, the City’s mental health services are under the purview of Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. The County directly provides or contracts with local providers to provide a

full array of services, but in many instances, the service planning and implementation is not in coordination with the City or local providers to ensure people in need of mental health supports don't fall through the cracks. At the same time, the role of local government has been expanding in recent years. As we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, delivering a proportionate response to the mental health epidemic requires that we fully integrate our service network by localizing our approach to addressing mental health issues. Long Beach already has its own prosecutor, health department, dispatch center, police, and fire departments. Better coordinating the many different arms of Long Beach's mental health services apparatus is vital – this already existing local infrastructure will serve as an excellent foundation to support our efforts to tackle this crisis. The Long Beach Racial Equity and Reconciliation Initiative calls on Long Beach to “increase investment in mental health and trauma services, including facilities, professionals, community responses, and culturally tailored resources.” As we acknowledge communities of color face especially high rates of mental illness and psychological trauma, especially in the aftermath of COVID-19, moving towards more locally tailored outreach and service provision can help reduce these inequities.

For these reasons, Long Beach should work together with local partners and the County of Los Angeles to explore more innovative localized collaborative approaches to mental health. As a city that recognizes the need to treat mental and physical healthcare as equivalent, asymmetries in program administration between city and county services allow far too many to fall through the cracks of our mental healthcare system, and we support this proposal because it will serve as a starting point from which to build the more robust infrastructure Long Beach so badly needs.

For these reasons, I support Council agenda item 45 and request an “Aye” vote on this important agenda item. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Kimberly Wee, VP Residential Services at kwee@century.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Colman", written in a cursive style.

Steve Colman, Executive Director
Century Villages at Cabrillo



November 9, 2021

Long Beach City Council
411 W Ocean Blvd
Long Beach, CA 90802

Dear Honorable Mayor Garcia and Members of the City Council:

Long Beach Forward strongly supports agenda item #45, “Localizing Mental Health Services in Long Beach” and asks for your affirmative vote on this timely action. Item #45 directs the City Manager to work with the Department of Health and Human Services and local mental health providers to explore the feasibility of establishing a more robust infrastructure for mental health services.

Before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, every aspect of mental health has continued to be a significant priority and a deeply felt need within the communities and neighborhoods we work with—from acceptance and stigmatization, and to access and service delivery. Within the Best Start Central Long Beach network, Black, Latinx, and Cambodian community leaders have continually prioritized mental health as a key priority and democratically allocated resources to projects that address the persistent gaps that exist in culturally competent mental health resources. As community leaders have engaged in the city budget cycle year after year, more concern has grown over the structural inequities that exist for sustaining ongoing mental health resources.

While promising models and services for mental health exist in particular pockets of the city, it is clear from our day-to-day experiences that the medicine is not strong enough. Despite Long Beach operating its own Health Department, the City’s mental health services are under the purview of Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. Los Angeles County directly provides or contracts with local providers to provide a full array of services, but in many instances, the service planning and implementation is not in coordination with the City or local providers to ensure people in need of mental health support don’t fall through the cracks. At the same time, the role of local government has been expanding in recent years.

We know that addressing the vast health inequities that exist in the city will not be solved by just one approach. As we focus on an equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, delivering a proportionate response to the mental health epidemic requires that we fully integrate our service network by localizing our approach to addressing mental health issues. Better coordinating the many different arms of Long Beach’s mental health services apparatus is vital – this already existing local infrastructure will serve as an excellent foundation to

OUR VISION

Race and income do not determine one’s future in Long Beach—
it’s a community where everyone is safe, connected, and healthy.

   @move1bforward

support our efforts to tackle this crisis. We see the exploration and action towards localizing mental health services as a meaningful step towards providing health and trauma-centered alternatives to mental health crises.

The Long Beach Racial Equity and Reconciliation Initiative calls on Long Beach to “increase investment in mental health and trauma services, including facilities, professionals, community responses, and culturally tailored resources.” As we acknowledge communities of color face especially high rates of mental illness and psychological trauma, especially in the aftermath of COVID-19, moving towards more locally tailored outreach and service provision can help reduce these inequities.

For these reasons, Long Beach should work together with local partners and the County of Los Angeles to explore adaptive and localized collaborative approaches to mental health. As a city that recognizes the need to treat mental and physical healthcare as equivalent, asymmetries in program administration between city and county services allow far too many to fall through the cracks of our mental healthcare system, and we support this proposal because it will serve as a starting point from which to build the more robust infrastructure Long Beach so badly needs.

For these reasons, Long Beach Forward strongly supports Council agenda item #45 and requests an “Aye” vote. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at james@lbforward.org. We look forward to working with the City of Long Beach on the exploration and implementation of this item upon its passage.

In solidarity,



James Suazo
Executive Director
Long Beach Forward



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

822 KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION/ LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
Telephone (213) 974-4444 / FAX (213) 229-3676

JANICE HAHN

Supervisor, Fourth District

November 8, 2021

Councilmember Rex Richardson
City of Long Beach
411 West Ocean Boulevard
Long Beach CA 90802

Dear Councilmember Richardson:

As a strong advocate for expanding mental healthcare, I am in support of your initiative to establish more mental health services in Long Beach with community and patient input and involvement in the process. It is essential to provide more access to mental health services across Long Beach and Los Angeles County and rethink the way we provide mental health assistance to our residents.

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated mental health symptoms of anxiety and depression throughout Los Angeles County. We are seeing many individuals, families, young adults and children coping with mental health illness and we anticipate the need for mental health services to only grow in the future.

As a result, we are changing our county's approach to respond to mental health crises and commend you for putting forth this initiative. As I have stated once before, it is important that when someone calls for help during a mental health crisis, we make sure that they can get help quickly from trained mental health professionals. I believe localizing and improving mental health response and connection to services will benefit the residents of Long Beach and I strongly support this initiative.

Sincerely,

JANICE HAHN

Supervisor, Fourth District
County of Los Angeles

November 9, 2021

Long Beach City Council
411 W. Ocean Blvd.
Long Beach, CA 90802

RE: Agenda Item #45

Dear Mayor & Members of the City Council,

As a mother, second district resident, and Chair of our city's Human Relations Commission it is with great pleasure that I submit this letter of support for agenda item 45, coming before Council on November 9, 2021, a recommendation to localize mental health services in Long Beach by exploring the feasibility of establishing a more robust infrastructure for mental health services.

It is well documented that we are living in unprecedented times and as a result are experiencing an unprecedented mental health crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic, systemic racism, polarizing politics and economic instability has exacerbated the mental health crisis facing Long Beach residents, as evidenced by an increase in over 1,000 more mental health related 911 calls for service in 2020 compared to 2019. Adults experiencing anxiety and depression has more than doubled and our suicide and drug overdose rates are well above the County average. There is no denying that a crisis of this proportion, requires immediate attention and adequate funding to address.

The City of Long Beach's Human Relations Commission has begun studying the issue of trauma response in the city, catalyzed by the tragic incident that took place on September 27, 2021 when a young resident, Mona Rodriguez, was unjustly shot and killed by an LBUSD School Safety Officer. That tragedy brought to light the gap in support available to families in the aftermath of a traumatic situation. In the absence of any grief counseling or trauma intervention, several community members came together to provide support to the family of Ms. Rodriguez, providing the family with food, refreshments, information on how to navigate the medical system, support in their calls for justice through the criminal justice system, connecting them with faith-based support, and generally were on hand for any support they needed.

While crisis response is just one service in the overall mental health infrastructure that is needed, it is an important component that has a lot of opportunity for community codesign and collaboration. Community-led trauma response models that works in partnership with local public health departments have been proven to be effective support in supporting families following the aftermath of tragedy.

Recently, the Long Beach Police Department began administering a Trauma Intervention Program, which deploys volunteers to respond to traumatic incidents. LBPD put this program in place without any collaboration with the Health Department, community organizations, or the Office of Equity. The Long Beach Racial Equity and Reconciliation Initiative calls on Long Beach to "increase investment in mental health and trauma services, including facilities, professionals, community responses, and culturally tailored resources." As well-intentioned as this program is, if there is anything we have learned during the Framework for Racial Equity and Reconciliation listening sessions is that the Long Beach Police

Department is not equipped to administer trauma intervention services, as they are often the source of trauma in many marginalized communities.

I strongly advocate for any trauma intervention services that the city invests in to be administered by the Health and Human Services Department in collaboration with Community Based Organizations and mental health service providers. Additionally, I would like to underscore that the Human Relations Commission is well equipped to collaborate with our local health department as we continue to partner with community-based organizations and local mental health providers to further study and recommend a community-led trauma response program. We are happy to be a partner in this endeavor.

Thank you for your time and consideration as you support this important first step in creating a comprehensive, localized mental health infrastructure in the City of Long Beach.

Sincerely,

Alyssa Gutierrez, MSW

Chair

Human Relations Commission, City of Long Beach



November 8, 2021

Long Beach City Council
411 W Ocean Blvd.
Long Beach, CA 90802

Re: Agenda Item #45 Localizing Mental Health Services in Long Beach

Dear Honorable Mayor Robert Garcia and members of the City Council:

On behalf of United Way of Greater Los Angeles, I am writing in **“Support”** of Council agenda item #45, **“Localizing Mental Health Services in Long Beach.”**

In 2010, UWGLA launched Home for Good, a cross sector initiative to help house our homeless neighbors and veterans experiencing chronic homelessness. Since then we have secured housing for over 45,000 homeless neighbors. In 2018, we launched the Everyone In campaign – creating a diverse coalition of nonprofits, community leaders and donors to build a grassroots-to-grassroots education, engagement and activation campaign with more than 196,000 supporters.

As we continue to work to address our housing and homelessness crisis, we also acknowledge the need for more holistic systems that are designed to address the needs of all individuals. Although we have seen firsthand that contrary to stereotypes that some perpetuate regarding our unhoused neighbors being on the streets due to mental health issues, we also know and acknowledge that the strain of living on the streets can cause mental health issues. Just as we want mental health resources for those of us that are housed, we also fight for these appropriate and needed resources for our unhoused neighbors.

Item #45 directs the Department of Development Services to the City Manager to work with the Department of Health and Human Services and local mental health providers to explore the feasibility of establishing a more robust infrastructure for mental health services.

Mental health is a significant issue in Long Beach, and the COVID-19 pandemic has made matters worse. Long Beach saw over 1,000 more mental health-related 911 calls in 2020 than in 2019. The share of adults experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression ballooned from 11% to 32%. Long Beach’s suicide and drug overdose rates are already well above the county average, and the City’s rate of emergency room visits due to mental health issues is twice the state average. More than half of Long Beach’s over 2,000 residents experiencing homelessness struggle with mental health issues. All these problems reveal a situation that should be treated as the public health crisis that it is – a crisis that deserves a proportionate response.

Although Long Beach has its own Health Department, the City's mental health services are under the purview of Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. The County directly provides or contracts with local providers to provide a full array of services, but in many instances, the service planning and implementation is not in coordination with the City or local providers to ensure people in need of mental health supports don't fall through the cracks. At the same time, the role of local government has been expanding in recent years. As we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, delivering a proportionate response to the mental health epidemic requires that we fully integrate our service network by localizing our approach to addressing mental health issues. Long Beach already has its own prosecutor, health department, dispatch center, police, and fire departments. Better coordinating the many different arms of Long Beach's mental health services apparatus is vital – this already existing local infrastructure will serve as an excellent foundation to support our efforts to tackle this crisis.

The Framework for Reconciliation calls on Long Beach to “increase investment in mental health and trauma services, including facilities, professionals, community responses, and culturally tailored resources.” As we acknowledge communities of color face especially high rates of mental illness and psychological trauma, especially in the aftermath of COVID-19, moving towards more locally tailored outreach and service provision can help reduce these inequities.

For these reasons, Long Beach should work together with local partners and the County of Los Angeles to explore more innovate localized collaborative approaches to mental health. As a city that recognizes the need to treat mental and physical healthcare as equivalent, asymmetries in program administration between city and county services allow far too many to fall through the cracks of our mental healthcare system., and we support this proposal because it will serve as a starting point from which to build the more robust infrastructure Long Beach so badly needs.

For these reasons, I support Council agenda item 45 and request an “Aye” vote on this important item. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tommy Newman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tommy Newman
Vice President, Engagement & Activation
United Way of Greater Los Angeles