



Date: April 13, 2020
To: Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Thomas B. Modica, Acting City Manager *T. Modica*
Subject: **Effects of COVID-19 Crisis on City Population**

City staff have been working to provide ethnicity data as it relates to how COVID-19 is affecting Long Beach's population. While people testing positive are generally aligning with our general population, we are seeing an over-representation of African Americans requiring hospitalization as a result of infection. This has been a trend in major urban centers and is similar in Long Beach. Of those requiring hospitalization in Long Beach, 21 percent are African American, compared to only 13 percent of our Long Beach population.

The virus most severely impacts those with underlying health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and high blood pressure and African Americans are over-represented in the percent of those in Long Beach experiencing these conditions. As we have seen in other data, factors such as implicit bias in health care and a host of other social determinants have contributed to these health inequities.

Race/Ethnicity	+ Cases %*	Hospitalized %	LB Pop %
Hispanic/Latino	35.2	33.75	42.5
White	26.7	22.5	28.1
African American	14.3	21.25	12.9
Asian	15.2	13.75	13.1
Other	8.6	8.75	N/A

*Race/ethnicity data were available for 61% of those with a positive diagnosis. The percentages are of the 187 cases where data were available.

Increased Local Testing

Given this history, Long Beach's African American population is more likely to live in overcrowded housing, rely on public transport, and have more limited access to testing and treatment. Because the data show much higher rates of hospitalizations for African Americans, we plan to offer additional free drive-through testing sites in these communities to help identify when people are infected, better educate the community on physical distancing protocols, sanitation practices, and quarantine/isolation protocols to slow the spread of disease to those with underlying health conditions. The City will also work to identify isolation sites for people who cannot isolate at home in a manner that is safe for all in the household. You will be hearing more about these efforts over the next week. We are working to ensure all our community members have the opportunity to remain safe and healthy during this pandemic.

Other Data Efforts

We continue to experience difficulty with gathering testing data by ethnicity, as does Los Angeles County, and steps are being put in place to get better data. Currently, the Los Angeles City website, which is used to sign up for testing, does not ask for ethnicity data. Long Beach and the County are requesting that this capability be added in the future, and the City of Long Beach is working to create its own testing website for local testing that can capture our own local data. We have also received requests on data on COVID-19 deaths. However, this data cannot be released yet per HIPPA guidelines until there are more than five deaths in each category – that data will be provided when available.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (562) 570-5091.

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