



Date: April 30, 2021

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

From: Kelly Colopy, Director of Health and Human Services 

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **MI VIDA CUENTA COVID-19 Latino Health Initiative**

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At its March 16, 2021 meeting, the City Council requested the City Manager to work with appropriate departments and report back to the City Council within 30 days on funding a MI VIDA CUENTA COVID-19 Latino Health Initiative (Initiative). The City Council requested that the Initiative should include sufficient resources for providing continuous health education, equitable vaccine distribution, appropriate food distributions, and mental health care for the Latinx community including undocumented residents.

The City of Long Beach (City) is fortunate to be comprised of diverse communities. The Latinx community is the largest in Long Beach, comprising of 42 percent of its population. The Latinx population has experienced significant challenges during this pandemic, with more than 19,000 cases (nearly 10 percent) of the Latinx population confirmed to have had COVID-19. As of April 16, 2021, 24 percent of vaccines provided to Long Beach residents were to our Latinx community. In addition, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Latinx population has experienced a decrease in life expectancy by approximately four years when compared to prior years. In the past year, the overall life expectancy decline in Long Beach was one year.

The Initiative calls for an integrated response among departments to engage community-based organizations and community partners to leverage an intersectional approach to:

- Ensure health education and health access, including equitable vaccination distribution
- Ensure food access
- Address mental health care
- Meet employment and housing needs
- Facilitate reach to the diverse members of the Latinx community, including undocumented residents

The Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services (Health Department) remains engaged with Latinx organizations and Latinx-serving organizations to co-create an equitable response to vaccine distribution for the Latinx community. The Health Department has partnered with the Latinos Contra COVID Task Force and other community-based organizations to successfully host various mobile vaccination clinics in impacted neighborhoods to effectively reach the Latinx community. Mobile clinics in Cesar Chavez Park, Houghton Park, Martin Luther King Jr. Park, Silverado Park, Admiral Kidd Park, and Washington Middle School vaccinated nearly 2,000 residents.

The Health Department also engages Latinx organizations and Latinx-serving organizations through the City's Vaccine Equity and Outreach Subcommittee, of which many partners from the Latinos Contra COVID Task Force are actively involved. This Subcommittee, which has convened since January 2021, unites diverse community voices, Latinx included, to advance vaccine equity. Subcommittee partners have effectively reached Latinx community members through vaccine outreach, awareness, and education efforts including:

- Distribution of educational materials
- Door-to-door canvassing
- Phone banking
- Facilitating (virtual) educational workshops
- Navigating clients to schedule vaccination appointments

In addition, the Health Department provided pop-up COVID testing sites in Latinx neighborhoods. Through CARES Act funding, more than \$1 million was distributed to Latinx and Latinx-serving organizations to provide COVID education and outreach, food distribution, mental health services, and early child supports.

Health Department staff will continue to collaborate with Latinx community partners, Latinx organizations, and Latinx-serving organizations to develop an Initiative Work Plan (Plan). Staff will contract with California State University, Long Beach, to effectively assess the health and wellness needs of the Latinx community and identify strategic cross-sectional approaches. Community stakeholders from the Vaccine Equity and Outreach Subcommittee, the Latinos Contra COVID Task Force, and other Latinx-owned and Latinx-serving institutions will be engaged in this process.

Community members and organizations will work to create a comprehensive and coordinated Plan that will outline cross-sector approaches to Latinx health and wellness. The Plan will outline recommended actions in the short-term (approximately three months) as well as a more sustainable, long-term response. The Health Department will report back on this Plan within 90 days.

If you have any questions, please contact me at [kelly.colopy@longbeach.gov](mailto:kelly.colopy@longbeach.gov) or (562) 570-4016.

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