

November 19, 2024

Honorable Mayor and City Council
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation to continue the local emergency regarding an outbreak of Tuberculosis (TB) pursuant to Section 2.69.060 of the Long Beach Municipal Code. (Citywide)

DISCUSSION

On May 2, 2024, the City of Long Beach's (City) Health Officer declared a local public health emergency in response to a Tuberculosis (TB) Outbreak occurring within Long Beach. There are 16 cases of active TB disease associated with this outbreak and, to date, more than 352 contacts have been identified. The outbreak is contained within the population of concern, a vulnerable population with an increased risk of TB disease due to significant barriers to care including homelessness and housing insecurity, mental illness, substance use, and serious medical comorbidities.

Progress During the Public Health Emergency

Contact Evaluation and Treatment

- We have identified 352 contacts to date.
- Outreach has been conducted (phone calls, field visits, correspondence) for 344 contacts.
- 127 contacts have been completely evaluated.
- Our investigation has identified five additional cases since November 2023.
- Our investigation has identified 31 patients with latent TB infection (LTBI); 19 of these individuals are on or have completed treatment.
- 104 contacts have either refused evaluation or we've been unable to locate them.
- 12 people with active TB have completed treatment and two other patients are currently on treatment.

Our goals for contact status, evaluation, and treatment include:

- 60 percent of critical and high-priority outbreak contacts be fully evaluated. We are currently at 48 percent.
- 70 percent of outbreak contacts with LTBI start treatment. Currently, we are at 61 percent.

- 80 percent of outbreak contacts starting LTBI treatment complete treatment. Currently, we are at 79 percent.

Staffing

The Long Beach TB Control Program faces a dire staffing shortage, especially among nursing and other clinical staff. We have open positions in the TB clinic for a full-time physician, a nurse practitioner, one Public Health Nurse (PHN), and an Outreach Worker II. To be considered fully clinically staffed, we should have a physician, a nurse practitioner, three PHNs, one RN, two medical assistants, one outreach worker, one CPS IV (EPI) and two health educators (Disease Intervention Specialists). Out of that list, we currently have two PHNs, two Medical Assistants, and one health educator.

The Health and Human Services Department (Health Department) continues to utilize mutual aid with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. While the mutual aid staff were expected to last until the end of September on a very limited basis, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has been gracious enough to extend some staff until the end of December 2024. We are accessing clerical staff, medical assistants and nursing staff through registries, and we continue to receive support from the California Department of Public Health.

Internally, we continue to reassign various staff to the TB outbreak response, which can affect services in their original work areas. Reassigned nurses from the Homeless Services Bureau, our public health physician and nurse practitioner from the HIV Care and Sexual Health Clinic, Public Health Emergency Management and Community Health data and epidemiological staff, disease intervention specialist (outreach) staff whose regular duties include outreaching, engaging and linking people with HIV and sexually transmitted infections to care, and Community Health staff with previous TB expertise have all pivoted their duties in some or all of their capacity to respond to the TB outbreak.

Outbreak Response

The Health Department outbreak response team continues to capture outbreak activities and remove barriers to screening, testing and treatment. We are currently developing systems that will allow us to:

- Provide reliable transportation to clients.
- Prioritize contacts for outreach.
- Expand housing options for clients in treatment.
- Track expenditures related to the outbreak; and,
- Address clients we have been unable to reach after multiple attempts.

Some patients have been nonadherent to their treatment plan, necessitating legal orders.

The City Council must review the need for continuing the local emergency at least every 30 days (see Long Beach Municipal Code section 2.69.060 and California Health and Safety Code

section 101080). Both the local emergency and the local health emergency must be terminated at the earliest possible date as conditions warrant.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Nicholas Masero on October 31, 2024, and Budget Analysis Officer Greg Sorensen on October 30, 2024.

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

City Council action is requested on November 19, 2024, to comply with State law.

FISCAL IMPACT

As of October 8, 2024, total TB emergency expenses are \$712,511. These expenses are composed of personnel costs, shelter, enablers, patient incentives, transportation, sampling, and lab testing. The Health Department is utilizing TB grant funding with existing appropriations in the Health Fund Group in the Health and Human Services Department prior to utilizing realignment funds. If needed, the Department will return to the City Council with a request for appropriations. Further, staff will pursue federal and State reimbursement for all City costs incurred. The Health Department was recently awarded \$400,000 by the California Department of Public Health TB Control Program in Special Needs funds. The TB local emergency resolution provides for the authority to accept and expend grant funding related to the proclaimed local emergency without City Council approval. The department will return to City Council to request appropriation for the TB grant award fund of \$400,000 during the normal budget process. This recommendation has no staffing impact beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and is consistent with existing City Council priorities. There is no local job impact associated with this recommendation.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,



Alison King
Director
Health and Human Services

APPROVED:



THOMAS B. MODICA
CITY MANAGER

ATTACHMENTS: RES-24-0066
EXHIBIT A: DECLARATION OF LOCAL HEALTH EMERGENCY
EXHIBIT B: PROCLAMATION OF LOCAL EMERGENCY