



January 18, 2021

Dr. Mark Ghaly
Secretary
California Health and Human Services Agency
1600 9th Street, Room 460
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dr. Barbara Ferrer
Director
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
313 North Figueroa Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Dr. Ghaly and Dr. Ferrer,

We are writing to request the California Health and Human Services Agency and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) immediately authorize Los Angeles Unified to provide vaccinations for COVID-19 to our school staff and to the community at large, including to students once a vaccine has been approved for children. We have reviewed the guidelines issued by the DPH and are working diligently to formally enroll in the government vaccination and reporting programs and complete all necessary planning and paperwork. We hope state and local agencies will expedite the review process once our application is received.

Schools which are part of Los Angeles Unified are uniquely situated – and uniquely qualified – to help in the vaccination effort:

- We have 1,413 schools which serve diverse communities spread across 710 square miles. Our schools are conveniently located in the middle of neighborhoods where people live, which will help make vaccines accessible to people in all communities, in particular those who may lack access to health care services.
- Since this crisis began, Los Angeles Unified has proven its ability to meet the needs of the community on a dramatic scale, operating 63 food distribution centers at schools which have provided 96 million meals along with 18 million items of much-needed supplies, distributing computers and internet access to 500,000 students, and operating 42 COVID testing centers at schools that have administered more than 350,000 tests to staff members, students and their families – the largest school-based program in the nation.
- Our school facilities are well-designed for large-scale distribution and provision of services. We know how to manage large numbers of visitors to a school campus and schools have the space needed to allow individuals to wait safely after their vaccine dose

to make sure they aren't having an adverse reaction. Schools have all the necessary infrastructure already in place – security, electricity, restrooms and both covered and open areas – to support the vaccination process.

- Los Angeles Unified has school-based health clinics in high-needs areas which are already licensed to provide vaccinations. These sites can immediately provide COVID-19 vaccinations while more locations at additional schools become qualified under state guidelines.
- Los Angeles Unified has the staffing, both clinical and logistical, to begin administering vaccinations now. We employ more than 450 registered nurses and 120 licensed vocational nurses, all of whom can administer the vaccine and can attend to those who may have an adverse reaction to the vaccine. In addition, Anthem Blue Cross and Health Net, partners in our COVID testing program, have both committed to provide additional clinicians to support a school-based vaccination effort. On the logistics front, we have a capable team of more than 1,400 people involved in the food distribution and COVID-testing efforts. Their duties include collaborating with local, state and federal agencies, procuring food and testing kits, scheduling and administering COVID tests and accurately reporting data to all relevant authorities. All involved in these efforts have been trained in appropriate health and safety protocols related to COVID-19 and know how to safely manage providing services to large numbers of individuals at schools.
- Los Angeles Unified has a technology and data system built with support of Microsoft which can register individuals, schedule vaccination appointments and share the data with appropriate authorities. Microsoft is connecting the District's existing COVID-19 technology capabilities with the vaccine platform Microsoft has deployed in other cities and states across the country. This platform includes registration and scheduling, reporting on complications/adverse effects, tracking of vaccines in stock, contactless appointment check-in and data capture at time of appointment, rules to sort high-risk individuals and offer waitlists to low-risk individuals and dashboards to view data, among other features.

The current programs are operating at the highest health and safety standards and are reporting the necessary data to relevant local, state and federal authorities in a timely and accurate manner. The food, computer and internet access and COVID testing programs are cost effective which helps scarce public dollars go further to help more individuals in need.

Few organizations in the Los Angeles area have this deep and proven set of capabilities and few are as trusted by the community. Families trust schools to keep their children safe and that trust extends to all aspects of a child's life. Providing the vaccination at a trusted location will increase the chances of a successful and more speedy vaccination effort.

As you know, access to health care services is a real barrier for many people in low-income communities. More than 80% of the families served by Los Angeles Unified live in poverty and 83% are Black and Latino residents, which have been the demographics most impacted by the virus. It's critical that the vaccine be made available to these families. In a typical community we

serve, there are about three drug stores, two fire stations and 25 schools. No organization has the infrastructure to provide easier access to vaccinations than schools.

There's a unique and important benefit to having Los Angeles Unified as a vaccination partner – doing so will help reopen schools as soon as possible, and in the safest way possible. Distance-learning for many students pales in comparison to learning in a classroom and we must find the safest path to provide in-person instruction. A critical part of reopening school classrooms will be creating a safe school environment including providing vaccinations to people who work in schools. This will not only protect the health and safety of our essential employees but will provide enormous benefit to children and their families, leading to a faster reopening of schools and of the economy more broadly by enabling the working families we serve to go back to work.

Other communities have already made schools a priority. New York has begun providing vaccinations to those who work in schools and Kansas City has committed to provide vaccinations to all school district staff in February. Locally, vaccinations are available in Riverside for all who work in education, in Ventura teachers will start receiving vaccinations next week and Long Beach will begin providing vaccinations to school employees later this month.

All the children in our school community deserve to be given the opportunity for a better future, the foundation of which is a great education. And that starts with schools being open.

We stand ready to extend our service to the communities we serve by helping to provide vaccinations and look forward to working with you on this effort. Please let us know how we might best follow up.

Thank you.



Austin Beutner