



# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY PREVENTION AND POPULATION HEALTH TASK FORCE

## COMMUNITY PREVENTION AND POPULATION HEALTH TASK FORCE

313 N. Figueroa St., Suite 708  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
(213) 288-8252  
www.ThinkHealthLA.org

## TASK FORCE CO-CHAIRS

Veronica Flores, MA

Nomsa Khalfani, PHD, MFT

April 23, 2019

Los Angeles County Office of Violence Prevention County Leadership Committee  
c/o Injury and Violence Prevention Program  
695 S. Vermont Avenue,  
South Tower, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90005

### **Letter of Recommendations Regarding the Establishment of the Office of Violence Prevention**

Dear Los Angeles County Office of Violence Prevention County Leadership Committee,

We, the Los Angeles County Community Prevention and Population Health Task Force, are writing to provide recommendations on the development of the Office of Violence Prevention (OVP), including the formation of a Community Partnership Council (CPC). The Community Prevention and Population Health Task Force (Task Force) was established by the County Board of Supervisors and plays a key role in promoting healthy, equitable communities by making recommendations to the Board of Supervisors, the Health Agency, and Department of Public Health (DPH) on policies and practices to improve population health in the County. The Task Force advises DPH's ongoing county-wide community health planning efforts to improve population health for all Los Angeles County community members, with a particular focus on guiding the development and implementation of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which includes Violence Prevention as one of its priorities.

The Task Force is in full support of the success of the OVP, and we are proud of the leadership the Board of Supervisors has taken. In years past, DPH has had varying partnerships and efforts in violence prevention around the County. Coalitions such as the Los Angeles County Violence Prevention Coalition (recently disbanded) and collaboratives including Building Healthy Communities, Best Start Partnerships, and the Violence Prevention Initiative have set a precedent for communities working in sync with public health, but it is high time to establish an office dedicated to the elimination of violence in Los Angeles.

On May 18, 2018, the Task Force established the Violence Prevention Ad Hoc Committee to provide targeted advisement on the establishment of the Los Angeles County Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) and report back to the larger Task Force body regarding County efforts to establish violence prevention strategies and mechanisms. We are especially pleased that the County has adopted the Board of Supervisors' mandate to set up the OVP within DPH and have appreciated ongoing opportunities for engagement with Andrea Welsing, Director, and Kelly Fischer, Staff Analyst, of the Injury and Violence Prevention Program. The Ad Hoc Committee has been actively following the progress of the OVP, is eager to inform the development of the OVP's strategic plan, and has a vested interest in the Office's success. Many of us on the Task Force participated in the listening sessions led by the Prevention Institute, and we are impressed with the level of attention and detail paid to residents' voices, expressed needs, and the

#### **Community Prevention and Population Health Task Force Members:**

Sonya Young Aadam · Manal Aboelata · Mayra Alvarez · Tamika Butler · Melinda Cordero-Bárzaga · Veronica Flores  
Michelle Fluke · Cathy Friedman · Nancy Halpern Ibrahim · Anisha Hingorani · Anne-Marie Jones · Nomsa Khalfani  
Jim Mangia · Ramella Markarian · Damon Nagami · Lauren Nakano · Elisa Nicholas · Theresa "Missy" Nitescu · Janae Oliver  
Maryjane Puffer · Cori Racela · Margaret Smith · Amanda Staples · Benjamin Torres · Nicole Wong

breadth and scope of violence across the County. We see our role as an independent, diverse, and geographically representative body that can advise in the next phases of setting up the OVP, adding our recommendations on the structure of the CPC and informing the future planning for the OVP.

### **Recommendations on the Planning Process**

- **Create a more sustainable timeline to determine equitable governance:** We recommend an extended timeline to allow time to develop the CPC and its governance structure, identify resources, onboard diverse members, learn from previous violence prevention efforts in Los Angeles County, and clarify its role. We believe the option of forming a temporary and time-limited CPC, as outlined in the draft proposal, is an excellent option to keep the strategic plan moving forward and to ensure the proper onboarding of the CPC. Adding an additional 6 months to the CPC timeline would coincide with establishment of a temporary CPC.
- **Formalize collaboration with the Community Prevention and Population Health Task Force Violence Prevention Ad-Hoc Committee:** We recommend that the current openness and level of communication between the Task Force Ad Hoc Committee and staff central to the planning of the OVP continue and is formally established through the selection of 1-2 members of the Ad-Hoc Committee to sit on the CPC.
- **Value of Transparency:** We recommend that OVP staff regularly communicate with the Task Force Ad Hoc committee to keep us informed of both the Community Leadership Committee and OVP's timeline and strategies early in the decision-making process—preferably before irreversible decisions are made.

### **Recommendations on the Community Partnership Council (CPC) Formation**

- **Reserve half of the seats on the CPC for survivors and center marginalized voices:** Ensure that the CPC centers those most impacted by violence and consider their needs in the development of the CPC. The CPC should reflect the diversity of perspectives, neighborhoods, ages, abilities, races, ethnicities, genders, religions, and sexual identities to build comprehensive, long-term, and inclusive strategies that address the root causes of violence and speak to the layers and complexities of violence.
- **Design the CPC with survivor-centered and trauma-informed practices:** Adopt community principles and invest in high-quality, trauma-informed facilitation to develop a space for CPC members that is welcoming, healing, and safe. Facilitators should be trained to establish trust, build solidarity, and ensure the space is inclusive and safe for survivors of marginalized identities.
- **Dedicate resources for equitable community access and active participation:** We recommend that CPC members receive stipends for participation, transportation support, child care, language translation, and disability access, in addition to capacity building resources in the form of mentorship, coaching, or peer groups to develop the capacity of survivors, especially young people, to share their stories and inform decision-making of the OVP.
- **Establish clear expectations and decision-making authority for the CPC:** We recommend a feedback loop be established between the CPC and yet-to-be established Service Planning Area (SPA) coalitions.

### **Recommendations on the Strategic Plan**

- **Engage CPC in planning process:** The CPC should play an important role in developing the Strategic Plan, informing its content and analysis, and determining goals and objectives.
- **Focus on the root causes of violence and impacts:** The Strategic Plan should interrogate and name the overarching structural factors, including racism, classism, and sexism and other sources of oppression, that have led to violence and its disproportionality in specific populations. This includes developing an analysis of the public health crises of over-policing and incarceration as a structural determinant of health and community-based alternatives and strategies.
- **Develop place-based and population-based analyses and strategies:** We recommend engagement with existing networks and seldom heard from communities in larger county contexts impacted by violence that incorporates place-based and population-based strategies.

- **Coordinate with the development of a countywide firearm policy:** The Strategic Plan should coordinate, inform, and speak to how the countywide firearm policy will fit into strategies to address gun violence.

Thank you for considering this important feedback as you embark on your charge to work across departments, engage groups and constituents impacted by violence, develop strategies and tools to identify root causes, and respond to the needs of those most impacted by violence. A strategy to eliminate violence is a bold step, and we believe that the OVP, building on generations of work before us, is well-positioned to ensure that constituencies across the County can achieve lasting safety outcomes and community health and well-being. We look forward to continuing to engage with the OVP and supporting its success.

Respectfully,



Veronica Flores, MA  
Task Force Co-Chair



Nomsa Khalfani, PhD, MFT  
Task Force Co-Chair

Members:

Sonya Young Adam, California Black Women's Health Project  
 Manal Aboelata, Prevention Institute  
 Mayra Alvarez, The Children's Partnership  
 Tamika Butler, Consultant  
 Melinda Cordero-Bárzaga, Visión y Compromiso  
 Veronica Flores, Community Health Councils  
 Michelle Fluke, Antelope Valley Partners for Health  
 Cathy Friedman, Peace Over Violence  
 Nancy Halpern Ibrahim, Esperanza Community Housing  
 Anisha Hingorani, Advancement Project  
 Anne-Marie Jones, The LA 84 Foundation  
 Nomsa Khalfani, Essential Access Health  
 Jim Mangia, St. John's Well Child and Family Centers  
 Ramella Markarian, Adventist Health Glendale  
 Damon Nagami, Natural Resources Defense Council  
 Lauren Nakano, Beach Cities Health District  
 Elisa Nicholas, The Children's Clinic  
 Theresa Nitescu, Northeast Valley Health Corporation  
 Janae Oliver, Kaiser Permanente  
 Maryjane Puffer, The Los Angeles Trust for Children's Health  
 Cori Racela, Western Center on Law & Poverty  
 Margaret Smith, Policy Council, Los Angeles County Office of Women's Health  
 Amanda Staples, Investing in Place  
 Benjamin Torres, Community Development Technologies Center (CDTech)  
 Nicole Wong, Redeemer Community Partnership