

Date: May 3, 2022

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager



From: Kelly Colopy, Director of Health and Human Services



For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: Update on Roe vs. Wade Response

In light of the recent news of the likely overturning of the Roe vs. Wade decision by the United States Supreme Court, this memorandum serves as an update and current status of the local efforts and response.

The Long Beach Health and Human Services Department (LBDHHS) stands in ardent support of women and their allies in ensuring that reproductive rights continue to be protected and prioritized, including access to the full scope of reproductive health services here in Long Beach.

Since the February 8, 2022 request by the City Council to meet and develop written recommendations on how Long Beach can partner with Los Angeles County (County) to respond should Roe vs. Wade be overturned, LBDHHS has been in ongoing conversations with the County as they collect information and plan for the following five directive areas:

- **Budget:** Identify funding to expand access to provide for a full range of prevention and treatment services, including removing barriers to access and expand or protect an individual's right to access a full spectrum of sexual and reproductive health care, including advocating for dedicated State funding for a local pilot project.
- **Enhanced medical training:** Develop a plan to address opportunities to enhance medical training, especially training on how to respond to abortion side effects and emergent complications. The plan would also include comprehensive sex and reproductive health education for targeted/relevant health care workers and recommending services and programs to support an overburdened health care workforce that is still grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Expansion of the reproductive healthcare workforce:** Look for ways to support and broaden an overburdened workforce by making recommendations for establishing pathways to train out-of-state providers, and partnerships with academic medical programs and institutions.
- **Creating a uniform referral system:** Understand the landscape and the current state of the health care referral system to identify barriers to services and reveal opportunities for network mapping and for patients to present to any "door" for a clinical service on the spectrum of sexual and reproductive health care and have seamless navigation to timely access for the desired service.

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- **Opportunities to reduce and address health disparities**

Develop a plan to determine ways to increase access and information to marginalized communities, specifically focused on women who are unhoused, incarcerated, have serious mental health concerns, and/or have substance use disorders, including increasing awareness of accessible benefits and insurance and include ways to quantify the increase in access to culturally competent reproductive health services.

These directive areas were outlined in the County's March 9, 2022 report on creating a safe haven at the county level and preserving reproductive health access.

The County is convening a variety of key stakeholders into workgroups to better understand impacts, explore the development of referral systems and better coordination of services across the region, with a report back to their Board of Supervisors expected by June 17, 2022. There will be a phased approach with short-term and long-term strategies to meet the immediate needs that will develop as well as to address the gaps currently existing within the reproductive health system.

Locally, LBDHHS is actively partnering with the County through its Women and Girls Initiative, Public Health Department and Health Care Services; Planned Parenthood; and our local provider network to understand existing services and capacity, with close attention paid to expanding funding, access and equity.

The California State Constitution protects abortion rights under a right to privacy. Although the Federal ruling has not been formally made, California lawmakers are working with Governor Newsom on ways to further codify rights for reproductive health in the State Constitution. A Constitutional amendment would require support by a supermajority of state legislators and a passing vote by the public in November 2022.

LBDHHS is actively tracking these legislative steps and will continue to be at the planning table to preserve and protect the rights of women in Long Beach and across the region.

Please feel free to contact me at kelly.colopy@longbeach.gov, or Dr. Jessica Schumer at jessica.schumer@longbeach.gov with any questions.

CC: CHARLES PARKIN, CITY ATTORNEY
DOUGLAS P. HAUBERT, CITY PROSECUTOR
LAURA L. DOUD, CITY AUDITOR
LINDA F. TATUM, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
TERESA CHANDLER, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
APRIL WALKER, ADMINISTRATIVE DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
KEVIN LEE, CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
MONIQUE DE LA GARZA, CITY CLERK (FILE # [22-0145](#))
DEPARTMENT HEADS