



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

HALL OF JUSTICE

ALEX VILLANUEVA, SHERIFF



December 13, 2021

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT COVID-19 PROTOCOL

As the elected Sheriff of Los Angeles County serving over 10 million residents and managing a severely underfunded Department, I must make realistic and attainable decisions regarding the best manner in which to provide public safety for the communities we serve. Taking 1,281 positions in Fiscal Year 2020/2021, from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD), coupled with your continued defunding efforts has created real world consequences. The communities we serve and my workforce are ultimately paying the price. I highlighted your Boards defunding the LASD in my previous letters dated November 24, 2021 and December 8, 2021.

Managing the largest sheriff's Department in the world, I have integral knowledge on the daily operations of this organization and how it must operate. Unlike other County Departments who have the luxury to close their doors on the general public and create a mere inconvenience, I have to run a 24 hours a day, seven day a week operation encompassing patrol operations, the care and custody of inmates, staffing the courts, and a myriad of specialized support units to ensure public safety.

The current draconian vaccination mandate and "one size fits all" approach will not work in the public safety environment and would require me to make decisions which could significantly alter my ability as Sheriff to perform my duties critical to public safety and my operations. The mild impacts this mandate may have on other Departments will be disastrous for the LASD. With crime rates on the rise and innocent citizens losing their lives daily, now is not the time to play politics. Since the beginning of the mandate, I tasked my staff to be intricately involved in the Unified Coordination Group (UCG),

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which as you know, is spearheading all County Departments' response to the vaccination mandate. My staff has been working, as much as possible, within the guidelines of the UCG's progressive steps to meet the mandate. However some steps, such as how testing of personnel would be conducted, were not conducive to LASD's 24 hour operation.

Additionally, I am reluctant to have LASD personnel register and test with your chosen contracted vendor as outlined in my letter to you dated October 28, 2021. Consequently, I directed my staff to create a secure internal vaccine status database and ordered all LASD personnel who had not already registered with the County's contracted vendor, to register in the newly established LASD's database, with excellent results. To date, I have achieved 97 percent registration compliance within the database. I have held LASD personnel accountable for reporting vaccination information. Moreover, I am currently working on a COVID-19 testing component for LASD personnel, which will also be enforced through corrective action. Each of these components continue to be discussed with our labor partners.

Finally, I am providing a timeline of the progressive steps LASD has taken in order to balance health and safety with public safety:

- On August 25, 2021, I instructed all Department employees to register in the Fulgent System. The order was disseminated via email to nearly 18,000 employees.
- On September 2, 2021, another email was sent indicating that failure to register in the system would result in further departmental action.
- On September 30, 2021, the Department sent an email reminding employees of the requirement to register in Fulgent by October 1, 2021, along with the Los Angeles County Workforce COVID-19 Vaccination Verification User Guide.
- On October 7, 2021, the document was resent via email with the notice that the deadline to register in the system was October 8, 2021.
- On October 8, 2021, an email was resent as a reminder indicating that day was the deadline to register.
- On October 14, 2021, the Department issued an email indicating the instruction to register in Fulgent was an order and that the choice to receive a vaccination or

- request an exemption was a separate issue that would be addressed in a subsequent email.
- On October 18, 2021, an email was sent thanking employees for registering in Fulgent, indicating that almost 80 percent of LASD employees had registered.
- On November 8, 2021, a message was sent disclosing that I was fully vaccinated and encouraged employees to receive the vaccination but, despite this, would not mandate the vaccination as it puts my Department at risk of losing necessary and vital personnel in order to maintain public safety at current levels.
- On November 9, 2021, an email was sent regarding testing sites for unvaccinated employees. The email went on to indicate that self-test kits would be made available in the future.
- On November 29, 2021, a global email was sent indicating that the LASD would no longer participate in testing via Fulgent Genetics sites due to privacy concerns. The email included a link to the Department's internal vaccination tracking database and instructions to provide responses via the link no later than December 3, 2021.
- On December 3, 2021, the Department issued an announcement via email indicating that due to security concerns, all Department personnel should cease using the Fulgent system and that the system had been blocked from Department computers. The announcement went on to indicate that weekly testing was suspended until further notice.

As I stated above, to date, over 97 percent of Department employees have provided their vaccination status via the Department's tracking database or were previously registered in Fulgent. I am striving for 100 percent compliance in registration. Once the Department has identified a reliable and safe testing company, unvaccinated Department employees will be required to resume weekly testing.


The LASD has incorporated multiple procedures to combat the COVID-19 virus. As you may recall, the LASD response to COVID-19 in our jail system became the national model. I have ordered my staff to wear masks and I have provided the opportunity for my staff to receive vaccinations (both first/second round and booster) through the Department's Emergency Services Detail. In addition, those that have not been vaccinated shall submit to COVID-19 testing and it will be enforced through corrective action and progressive discipline.

The threat to human life and health far exceed the potential indirect harms to the public resulting from my deputies who may quit or be fired for making a personal medical decision, while leaving public safety compromised. As such, I have created reasonable accommodations for my work force in the interest of public safety and I am still encouraging my employees to get vaccinated. I highlighted the imminent threat to public safety in my letter to your Board dated October 28, 2021.

As we move forward, we will continue to meet, fully inform, and address the concerns of our collective bargaining units.

Should you have any questions or would like to discuss further, please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Villanueva', with a stylized flourish at the end.

ALEX VILLANUEVA
SHERIFF