

April 6, 2016

Los Angeles Economic Development Committee
c/o Office of the City Clerk
200 N. Spring St., Room 470
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attn: Adam Lid, Legislative Assistant

Re: Council File 14-1371- Follow-up Policy Elements for a Citywide Minimum Wage

Honorable Councilmembers,

The California Black Health Network strongly supports a Los Angeles citywide paid sick day law. We recognize the critical importance of paid sick time for the public health. When workers are able to take the time they need to recover from illness or care for a sick family member, we can limit the spread of communicable diseases, improve workers' productivity, and boost our economy.

The California Black Health Network (CBHN) is a statewide policy and advocacy organization established in 1978. Our organization's mission is to improve the health status of people of African descent in California and to eliminate health disparities through legislative, administrative and media advocacy.

Considerable research indicates that lack of paid sick days contributes to the spread of flu and other illnesses. Particularly for workers handling food or working with vulnerable populations, such as patients in healthcare settings, children, and the elderly, the dangers of working while ill extend well beyond the individual worker to whole communities. Moreover, research shows that when parents have access to paid sick days, they are more likely to ensure their children receive critical vaccinations, and children are more likely to recover quickly from illness when they are cared for by their parents. Workers with sick days are more likely to receive regular well-care, cancer screenings, and prenatal care.

Thanks to recent healthcare reforms, more Californians now have access to health insurance. However, in order for citizens of Los Angeles to reap the benefits of their new coverage, including access to the preventive care that will ultimately save our economy billions of dollars, they must have the time to visit their healthcare providers without fear of losing their jobs or their wages.

The nation's leading public health organization, the American Public Health Association (APHA), has voiced [strong support](#) for laws that guarantee workers access to paid sick time. In the absence of federal law, the APHA has urged states and localities to pass



their own paid sick day laws, pointing to San Francisco's law as a model. While the state of California has recently passed its own law, the maximum of three days it guarantees workers lags behind what San Francisco guarantees its workers: up to nine days. We must ensure that workers in Los Angeles catch up to their counterparts in San Francisco, Emeryville, Oakland, and now in our neighboring city, Santa Monica.

The Los Angeles City Council has exercised impressive leadership in passing a \$15 minimum wage; this is an important step that will lift many families out of poverty. Yet, according to one study, one in seven low-wage workers – and one in five low-wage working mothers – has lost a job in the past four years because they were sick or needed to care for a family member. If workers risk losing their jobs simply because their children have the flu or they must see a doctor, even a higher minimum wage will not be enough to ensure they can support their families.

I respectfully ask that the committee support a strong local paid sick day law without delay. It is essential for a healthy Los Angeles.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra Poole". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "S".

Sandra O. Poole, MPA
Interim President/ CEO
California Black Health Network