

AMENDING MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS APRIL 26, 2016

Addressing Staffing Needs in Health Information Management

The Department of Health Services (DHS) has relied on temporary health information management personnel services registries for many years to address critical staffing shortages in medical records coding services, peak workloads, unexpected emergencies, and vacation coverage at DHS facilities. With the transition to Medi-Cal managed care under the Affordable Care Act and the new Section 1115 Waiver payment incentive program worth hundreds of millions of dollars per year in potential revenue to DHS, more detailed coding of inpatient and outpatient services to demonstrate performance and justify capitation rates is vital to DHS' success.

Extensive DHS Health Information Management (HIM) Division vacancies coupled with the implementation of a new health information management system have resulted in severe backlogs at multiple DHS facilities. In particular, Harbor-UCLA Medical Center has only three of the thirteen coders needed given the number of discharges. DHS staff has conducted an extensive planning process that seeks to address the challenges they have experienced in recruiting and retaining qualified coders, and filling the 56 Health Information Management Division items that remain vacant. They have also increased the annual budget for temporary health information

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management personnel services agreements to \$13.56 million, an increase of \$2.16 million over last year's budget, to meet current demands.

Presently, temporary health information personnel services contracts account for approximately 40% of outpatient coding work and 61% of inpatient coding work. The Board of Supervisors should be kept informed as to the progress being made to reduce the use of registry workforce, address the HIM vacancies, and clear the backlog at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center and other DHS facilities.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: Direct the Director of the Department of Health Services (DHS) to report back quarterly in writing to the Board of Supervisors, with the first report due by June 30, 2016, on progress being made to reduce the use of temporary health information management personnel services registries, fill the 56 Health Information Management Division items, and reduce coding backlogs at DHS facilities throughout the County of Los Angeles.

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