



## **ACT NOW AGAINST METH COALITION'S SUGGESTED PLATFORM FOR METH PREVENTION, TREATMENT AND POLICY**

**March 21, 2021 – Los Angeles** – Earlier today **Act Now Against Meth (ANAM)**, the first grass roots effort to promote policy and systems change in addressing the meth epidemic, presented their suggested platform for meth prevention, treatment and policy to the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors.

### **ANAM offers the following methamphetamine use prevention recommendations:**

- The LA County Board of Supervisors are recommended to: 1) Improve coordination among the Los Angeles Department of Health Services, Department of Public Health, Department of Mental Health, Department of Children and Family Services, Department of Probation, Sheriff's Department, Homeless Services Authority, Department of Public Social Services, and other affiliated agencies, and 2) Direct the County of Los Angeles Alliance for Health Integration to help support and facilitate this coordinated approach across County Agencies.
- The LA County Department of Mental Health should allocate Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) funds for meth prevention activities and implement holistic prevention efforts in collaboration with the Department of Public Health's Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (SAPC) program
- Improve coordination among community-based organizations, prevention providers, treatment programs, medical providers, and community health centers/Federally Qualified Health Centers
- Expand housing capacity for unhoused residents in LA County
- Expand and promote access to navigation services for unhoused people who are placed into temporary housing facilities
- Prioritize funding for prevention case management as part of harm reduction efforts.
- Ensure substance use prevention and treatment referrals are offered to clients accessing HIV, STI, and viral hepatitis screening, as well as HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis/Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP/PEP) services, to promote a holistic approach to wellness
- Incorporate comprehensive HIV, STI, and viral hepatitis screening, as well as PrEP/PEP navigation services, in substance use prevention and treatment programs through collaboration with clinical service providers across LA County
- Increase the availability and accessibility of effective mental health services across Los Angeles County
- Improve cultural proficiency among County departments and service providers
- Continue and increase support for those returning to the community after incarceration
- Provide evidence-based, age-appropriate substance use curricula from K-12
- Fund community-based, grassroots prevention efforts that specifically address methamphetamine

### **ANAM offers the following methamphetamine treatment recommendations:**

- Fund, invest in, and promote the use and expansion of evidence-based behavioral and interventions to treat methamphetamine addiction
- Expand efforts to explore, formalize, and fund biomedical treatments

- Require physicians, counselors, behavioral health providers, social workers, educators, judicial system, law enforcement officers, and others across the County service system to participate in annual trainings on trauma-informed approaches to addressing methamphetamine use
- Promote and normalize the use of naloxone, fentanyl strips, syringe services and other harm-reduction measures as meth treatment tools across the County
- Implement harm reduction principles
- Fund, invest in, and increase the number of certified detox facilities throughout each Service Planning Area, and ensure no patient shall be turned away due to lack of financial ability
- Fund, invest in, and increase coordination of treatment efforts between mental health and substance use providers
- Ensure meth treatment programs address the complex, holistic needs of marginalized racial and ethnic communities by investing in and expanding the capacity of service providers who reflect the racial and ethnic identities of those communities
- Invest in and increase the number of LGBTQ+ meth treatment centers specifically designed for LGBTQ+ patients in all Service Planning Areas to ensure treatment services are culturally and linguistically proficient and accessible to people of all identities within the LGBTQ+

**ANAM offers the following key policy recommendations to expand access to effective prevention and treatment options and develop a more robust, compassionate response to the methamphetamine crisis in LA County:**

- Increase access to comprehensive health coverage
- Expand access to contingency management services
- Support the creation of a new safe harbor provision to the federal anti-kickback statute
- Increase funding for effective prevention and treatment interventions
- Increase funding for low-barrier harm reduction services, including syringe service programs, and work to increase public awareness of the effectiveness of harm reduction to reduce stigma
- Continue to support statewide and local efforts to authorize and establish supervised consumption services
- Support efforts to decriminalize drug possession and increase diversion programs
- Advance racial equity policy and legislation
- Endorse legislation to declare methamphetamine an emerging drug threat
- Create a Meth Awareness Day in the County of Los Angeles

Speakers at today's presentation included Katherine Hayes (Senior Program Officer of the California Health Care Foundation), Dr. Steven Shoptaw (Director of the Center for HIV Identification, Prevention and Treatment Services) and Richard L. Zaldivar (The Wall Las Memorias Founder-Executive Director). Additionally representatives from AMAAD Institute, APLA Health, APAIT, Being Alive!, Center for Health Justice, Clare Matrix, Community Coalition, Day One, Helpline Youth Center, Institute for Public Strategies, Koreatown Youth Community Center, Latino Equality Alliance, Long Beach HIV Comprehensive Planning Group, Los Angeles LGBT Center, Pueblo y Salud, Social Model Recovery Systems, and Tarzana Treatment Centers were also present.

"There are evidence-based treatments for methamphetamine use that are on the shelf and ready to roll out. The silos of bureaucracy that interfere with making these treatments available to our communities must work together immediately and provide for the public health," said Dr. Steven Shoptaw.

"The Act Now Against Meth Coalition takes a grass roots approach in bringing a real approach to addressing the meth epidemic. I am proud of bringing together many community-based organizations, groups and individuals in making recommendations to address meth in the treatment and prevention of meth in our community," Richard Zaldivar, Executive Director, The Wall Las Memorias and leader of the Act Now Against Meth Coalition.

The Act Now Against Meth Coalition was resurrected by [The Wall Las Memorias Project](#). Following a virtual Act Now Against Meth Community Summit in March 2021, they created a workgroup that has met for over 54 cumulative hours to draft a list of recommendations to better address crystal meth in Los

Angeles County, reflecting the needs community stakeholders have expressed throughout the past two years. The aim of the coalition is to demand a strong public health response to rapidly increasing meth use in vulnerable communities across Los Angeles County.

The Wall Las Memorias started the Act Now Against Meth campaign in 2006 when they led a small coalition to address the Meth Epidemic. The coalition collected over 10,000 signatures of county residents demanding action from the county of Los Angeles. That action resulted with more than \$1.6 million for prevention and treatment services.

### **About The Wall Las Memorias (TWLM)**

The Wall Las Memorias (TWLM) is a community health and wellness organization dedicated to serving Latino, LGBTQ and other under-served populations through advocacy, education and building the next generation of leadership.

TWLM serves low-income and hard-to-reach communities throughout Los Angeles educating community members on the importance of HIV and AIDS, substance abuse prevention, mental health stigma reduction for LGBTQI2-S transitional-aged youth (TAY), transgender women health and wellness, non-binary health and wellness, and community building in the marginalized communities. For more than 26 years, the organization has helped eradicate stigma and bigotry and created a safer place in our communities for dialogue, community building, education and prevention services for this devastating epidemic using its AIDS Monument as a catalyst for social change.

TWLM has made it their mission to provide access to specialized services designed to prevent disease and to promote societal wellness; guarantee that individual voices of the community are heard and that all are in agreement on the essential need for social change; promote the use of TWLM AIDS Monument as an acknowledged catalyst for change and action; and engage the LGBTQ and faith communities, making both entities full partners in promoting wellness and eliminating stigma among all people.