



# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES COMMISSION ON ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

1000 SOUTH FREMONT AVENUE  
ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91803  
626-299-4105

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## **League of Cities**

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## **COMMISSION ASSISTANT**

Ronae Harrison

[RHarrison@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:RHarrison@ph.lacounty.gov)

January 7, 2021

Dear Commissioners,

Happy New Year. I hope all of you are safe and healthy, and able to take appropriate protective precautions in this very difficult time in Los Angeles County. Sadly, but hardly surprisingly, Dr. Ferrer has asked that we reschedule her presentation to the Commission from next week to sometime in the Spring, and we are working to accommodate that request. This has two immediate consequences for our Commission:

1. Our January meeting will be held at its usual 1 p.m. time on Wednesday, January 13th. Please see attached Agenda, including necessary revisions; and
2. Our focus in January will include presentations by SAPC regarding vaccination processes for those at risk in the SUDs communities; discussion of the impact of Covid-19 on those struggling with substance use/abuse issues; discussion of SB 855 as a partial response to problems now facing those with SUDs; and discussion of how our Commission may want to adjust our Strategic Priorities given the reality of what is occurring and the prospects of legislative and administrative responses.

In preparation for our meeting, please review the attached articles from the LA Times and New York Times regarding the realities of challenges for those battling SUDs and the brief Legislative Counsel's Digest of SB 855 concerning the Mental Health Parity Act. JAMA's report of overdose deaths doubling at the height of the Coronavirus restrictions and Dr. Ferrer's current advice to LA County residents to shelter-in-place means these issues are immediate and urgent for County residents. As I expect SAPC to advise us, vaccination in the SUDs communities will come, but certainly not in time to meet the emergency conditions of which Dr. Ferrer has advised us. These tragic consequences and continuing challenges should drive your thinking as we come to setting our own priorities for 2021. Whether Dr. Friedman's suggestions are appropriate we may want to discuss. I am reaching out to see if he might be able to make a short presentation at our meeting next week.

As I prepare to turn the gavel over, I want to thank each of you for your many contributions in 2020. I have been working on the Annual Report over the holidays and I am disappointed, of course, that our planned efforts for the Commission in 2020 were compromised in significant part by the COVID-19 crisis, but I greatly appreciate your assistance as we made necessary adjustments in our focus, and your understanding as we managed the conversion to Zoom processes. I look forward to a better year for our Commission, for our County, and especially for those battling substance use disorders.

Sincerely,

Bennett W. Root, Jr.  
Chair, Commission on Alcohol and Other Drugs