



**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA ITEM TRANSMITTAL**

(1) DEPARTMENT Public Health		(2) MEETING DATE 3/21/2017		(3) CONTACT/PHONE Penny Borenstein 781-5519	
(4) SUBJECT Request to hire Loretta Parrish, R.N., to a Community Health Nurse II position at step 5 of the salary range. All Districts.					
(5) RECOMMENDED ACTION It is recommended that the Board approve hiring Loretta Parrish, R.N., to a Community Health Nurse II position at step 5 of the salary range.					
(6) FUNDING SOURCE(S) Federal, State and General Fund		(7) CURRENT YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT \$3,000		(8) ANNUAL FINANCIAL IMPACT \$10,000 (FY 17-18 only)	
(9) BUDGETED? Yes					
(10) AGENDA PLACEMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing (Time Est. _____) <input type="checkbox"/> Board Business (Time Est. _____)					
(11) EXECUTED DOCUMENTS <input type="checkbox"/> Resolutions <input type="checkbox"/> Contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinances <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A					
(12) OUTLINE AGREEMENT REQUISITION NUMBER (OAR) N/A				(13) BUDGET ADJUSTMENT REQUIRED? BAR ID Number: <input type="checkbox"/> 4/5th's Vote Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	
(14) LOCATION MAP N/A		(15) BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT? No		(16) AGENDA ITEM HISTORY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A Date _____	
(17) ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE REVIEW Morgan Torell					
(18) SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S) All Districts					



## COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Jeff Hamm, Health Agency Director  
Penny Borenstein, MD, Health Officer/Public Health Administrator

DATE: March 21, 2017

SUBJECT: Request to hire Loretta Parrish, R.N., to a Community Health Nurse II position at step 5 of the salary range. All Districts.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board approve hiring Loretta Parrish, R.N., to a Community Health Nurse II position at step 5 of the salary range.

### **DISCUSSION**

Public Health Department staffing is comprised of a range of licensed professionals, administrators, program managers, support staff, and others. Due to persistent recruitment challenges with several categories of licensed clinical personnel, your Board approved several salary increases and new specifications to support career growth for certain job classifications to be implemented in Fiscal Year (FY) 2016-17.

Notwithstanding the salary increase for nurse positions in 2016, Public Health has continued to experience a significant challenge in filling positions with licensed registered nurses. Currently the Public Health Department has 7.5 FTE nursing vacancies, which is largely due to the inability to compete with local hospital wages. 1.5 FTE of these vacancies have been vacant for over a year.

There have been several rounds of recruitment over the past year, each of which did not result in filling all vacancies. The most recent recruitment effort resulted in nine applicants, with only six applicants scheduled for interviews (three applicants did not respond to the invitation to schedule an interview). Of the six scheduled interviews, only four interviews were completed with two applicants withdrawing from the interview process - one applicant decided to stay in her current position at a local hospital; the other applicant decided to take a new position closer to her current, lower cost, residence.

Of the four interviewed applicants, one decided to stay in her current position out of state; one took a Public Health Nurse position in Santa Barbara County at a step 3 with an annual salary of \$87K (equal to PHN II midway between

steps 4 and 5 in SLO County); one scored low on the interview and was not thought to be a good fit for a Field Nursing position. The last candidate, Loretta Parrish, RN, meets the requirements for a CHN II and has asked to be brought on at step 5. Ms. Parrish has work experience within Women's Health, Obstetrics, and Case Management of high-risk pregnant women, such that the County can expect her orientation period to be shorter than average, and that she would be able to manage a full caseload (25-30 families) within 6-9 months, or about half the time needed for a new inexperienced nurse. Ms. Parrish has previously worked for the County of San Luis Obispo which will also allow a quicker orientation process.

The vacant position of interest in this request resides in the Field Nursing Program within the Family Health Services Division of the Health Agency. Field Nursing home visiting programs have long been a staple of public sector efforts to support positive parenting and to improve outcomes for families residing in identified at-risk communities. Targeted outcomes of these programs include: improved maternal and child health; prevention of child injuries, child abuse and maltreatment, and reduction of emergency department visits; improvement in school readiness and achievement; reduction in crime or domestic violence; improvements in family economic self-sufficiency. Thus, in essence, these home visiting programs are an investment in public safety.

According to a 2009 analysis by Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) in California, nurse-visited families enrolled in the model program used in SLO County, the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP), gain academic and employment skills to become economically self-sufficient. PIRE reported that NFP services result in lower enrollment in Medicaid and Food Stamps, with a resultant 9% and 11% reduction in costs, respectively, over 10 years following the birth of the child.

Some of the outcome measurements for NFP at the national level are:

Smoking tobacco during pregnancy	24% less smoke tobacco
Preterm births (< 37wks)	15% reduction on preterm birth rates
Breastfeeding	11% increase
Immunizations up to date by age 2	13% increase
Childhood injuries	33% reduction

Within the Field Nursing Program is a component implemented in partnership with the County Department of Social Services, called the Voluntary Service Plan (VSP). Under VSP, PHNs co-manage cases of pregnant women who have tested positive for substance use at the time of labor and delivery. The VSP provides an opportunity for women who have delivered a substance-exposed infant to voluntarily accept a drug and alcohol assessment and participate in treatment services, thereby diverting the mother and newborn from requiring Child Welfare Services involvement.

Further rationale for maintaining a robust constellation of PHNs is to ensure that the County is prepared to respond to the next unforeseen Public Health emergency or non-routine situation. Not a year has gone by since 2008 without some type of event that resulted in the necessity to call upon additional nursing resources to manage the circumstances; e.g., pandemic influenza, measles outbreaks, Ebola response, multi-drug resistant tuberculosis cases, changes in school immunization law, and more. When surge resources are diminished, the community as a whole may suffer. Unlike more classic local emergencies, such as earthquakes or fires, public health emergencies are frequently geographically widespread, and thus mutual aid is not available from other jurisdictions.

In brief, the Field Nursing program has an immediate and long-lasting positive impact not only on the families served in the program, but also the community at large.

Ms. Parrish, a former County employee, would like to return to the County but is unwilling to do so unless it is at a Step 5 in the CHN II salary range. There are no other candidates for hire at this time. Section 2.48.060(b)(2) of the County Code specifies that only the Board may make appointments in non-management job classes at steps 4 or 5 of the salary range.

**OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT/IMPACT**

None.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

No additional General Fund support monies are being requested with this Board agenda item. The department anticipates that it will be able to absorb the additional cost of approximately \$3,000 with salary savings for the current fiscal year. The estimated impact of \$10,000 for FY 2017-18 (the approximate difference in pay between the Step 2 and Step 5 salaries) will likely be offset by ongoing vacancies or the hire of staff at a lower level in the career series.

**RESULTS**

In light of the difficulty recruiting a qualified candidate for the subject Community Health Nurse/Public Health Nurse position and the timeframe in which the department has been attempting to fill the position, the recommended action will allow the department to restore and maintain critical health services to high risk pregnant women, infants, and children in our community at no, or very small, increased cost. Further, as the position will be filled by someone already familiar with the County, community and the high risk population served by Field Nursing specifically, less time will be required to train. Filling this position at a step 5 will help more quickly and effectively deliver health care services to high risk families thereby contributing to the County's efforts to achieve our vision of a Safe and Healthy Community.