

# Opposition Letter to Community Care Ordinance File 11-0262

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February 16, 2012

Honorable Councilmembers  
Los Angeles City Hall  
200 North Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**RE: COUNCIL FILE 11-0262, PROPOSED COMMUNITY-CARE LICENSING ORDINANCE**

Dear Council Members:

On behalf of the Los Angeles County Sober Living Coalition (LACSLC), I am writing to urge your opposition to the above-referenced draft ordinance because the ordinance's negative impact on our agency, services, and service recipients. In the City of Los Angeles, we currently oversee 198 shared housing locations to 2,086 residents that house men, women, women with children, veterans, and seniors in single family homes in residential zones. Recovery homes have been a part of Los Angeles neighborhoods for over 50 years. The Coalition has been serving the community for 17 years without problems. Our residents and homes are full civic participants in many activities that improve the quality of life in the City of Los Angeles. The proposed ordinance would result in closing many of our homes, putting vulnerable and disabled residents on the streets, and eliminate thousands of affordable housing opportunities on which many Angelinos rely.

The LACSLC exists solely to promote recovery. Our mission is to expand, enhance and support recovery opportunities in our communities. Our purpose is to help people and communities recover from the ravages of substance use disorders including drug addiction and alcoholism. We specialize in developing quality recovery housing environments and increasing access to meaningful recovery activities. The Network's belief is that recovery is best achieved when safe, supportive housing is accessible to all who need it.

Recovery for persons suffering from the disease of addiction is a national priority. The LACSLC hosts an annual Recovery Summit at Loyola Marymount University recognized by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration – Center of Substance Abuse Treatment (SAMHSA-CSAT) and the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). The City of Los Angeles recognized the Summit with a City Council Resolution supporting these recovery based efforts.

This proposed ordinance is poorly crafted and bad policy. We oppose the proposed ordinance and ask you to vote against it for many reasons, including these:

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- There is no objective evidence from any study conducted uniformly across the entire jurisdiction that supports the premise of this ordinance, namely that homes with multiple leases are a widespread problem causing community health and safety problems. Additionally, there is no evidence to support that they create problems to a greater degree than homes without multiple leases. Complaining neighbors are compelling politically for elected officials but isolated incidents cannot be construed as systematic evidence.
- Despite what proponents of this ordinance may say, there is no mechanism in the ordinance for preserving the rights of disabled individuals to access the housing of their choice.

We recommend strengthening the ordinance by focusing on effective and prompt enforcement of nuisance laws, eliminating the re-definition of “boarding or rooming house,” eliminating the lease requirement in the definition of “single housekeeping unit,” enforcing the existing state occupancy standard applicable to licensed facilities and removing the restrictive parking standard.

Thank you for your attention to this issue. I hope you will recognize the cost of driving even a single person into homelessness or reducing treatment capacity and that you will take steps to modify this ordinance.

Sincerely,

Los Angeles County Sober Living Coalition



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