

Media Advisory for Tuesday, May 14, 2019 – 11 AM

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L.A. CITY RECREATION AND PARKS LIFEGUARDS SOUND THE ALARM ON NEGLIGENCE AFTER 20+ LIFEGUARDS BREAK OUT IN RASHES FROM BACTERIAL INFECTIONS AFTER SWIMMING IN CITY PARK LAKE; UNION REPRESENTING LIFEGUARDS FILES GRIEVANCE

*Lifeguards raise concerns on Hansen Dam Aquatic Center; Coalition of
L.A. City residents and lifeguards is speaking out against the City's
negligence that has led to a disregard for health and safety protections for
lifeguards and the public*

Lake View Terrace, CA —LA City lifeguards and San Fernando Valley community leaders are coming together to condemn the Los Angeles City Department of Recreation and Parks for turning a blind-eye to lifeguard's concerns over the water quality at the Hansen Dam Aquatic Center. Lifeguards are demanding immediate testing of water at the complex, and a prohibition of access to the recreational lake until safe.

"Despite us lifeguards raising serious concerns about the water quality at the Hansen Dam Recreational Lake, we were simply ignored and told it was 'safe' to go in during a mandatory open water skills testing on April 27th. Lo and behold, 20 of us were immediately stricken with a nasty case of body rashes and had to seek immediate medical attention," said Jasper Kim, a 13-year veteran based out of the Hansen Dam Lake Aquatic Center who has suffered the most severe of rashes from the bacterial infection.

Adding, "My body welted up with red bumps and blisters, which I still have not recovered from and I am currently taking medication for. Despite this troubling medical condition, I was told I could not use my sick days, and simply had to work in another part of the City as I recovered from the infection, or simply take a vacation."

WHAT: Press Conference Demanding Immediate Fix to Water Quality Crisis at Hansen Dam Aquatic Center

WHO: L.A. City Lifeguards and Community Residents

WHEN: Tuesday, May 14, 2019 at 11:00 AM

WHERE: Hansen Dam Aquatic Center, 11798 Foothill Blvd., Lake View Terrace, CA 91342 (Enter off of Osborne St. and Dronfield Ave. – access the small lake at the gate by the water slides)

VISUALS: Blown Up Pictures of Lifeguard's Body Rashes

For years, the Department of Recreation and Parks placed restrictions on entering the lake unless for emergencies but suspended their own rules on the weekend of April 27th. The union representing City lifeguards has filed a [group grievance on behalf of every lifeguard demanding that the City immediately have the water tested at all open water and swimming pools in accordance with prescribed safety protocols.](#)

The bacterial infection breakout comes on the heels of the LA City Department of Recreation and Parks dropping the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification requirement for all new lifeguard hires, a reversal of a longstanding requirement for all open water lifeguards who are often the first to arrive on the scene of an emergency.

Background:

Over 20 LA City Lifeguards suffered **cercarial dermatitis** after LA City managers at the Department of Recreation and Parks told them the water was safe for open water skills testing. The parasites that cause **cercarial dermatitis**, commonly known as "swimmer's itch," normally live in waterfowl and some animals. According to the CDC, swimmer's itch is caused by parasites from infected birds, mammals and snails. When the parasites come into contact with humans, the parasites burrow into the skin causing an allergic reaction and rash. Humans aren't suitable hosts, so the parasites soon die while still in the skin.

Due to the Cabrillo Beach closure, where open water skills testing for LA City Lifeguards is normally held, the City moved the testing to Hansen Dam Recreational Lake on the weekend of April 27th.

In anticipation of this move, L.A. City Lifeguard Jasper Kim raised concerns, in writing, to the City weeks in advance, citing the lack of appropriate water quality testing for parasite testing at the Hansen Dam Recreational Lake.

The Hansen Dam Recreation Lake, where the lifeguards were infected, is filled with circulated tap water and it offers fishing and boating to the public. While swimming is prohibited to the public, the lake is open year-round and hosts activities throughout the year.

Most recently, [the event "Fishing 101" was held at the Hansen Dam Lake](#), and the Aquatic Center holds the largest municipal pool in the United States.

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