

Southern California Permanente Medical Group
4950 Sunset Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90027



January 4, 2002

Supervisor Michael Antonovich
LA County Board of Supervisors
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Antonovich,

As a medical doctor of Mexican-American descent who serves a diverse population of patients from all over Los Angeles, I believe that a Commission for Men could be a valuable asset to Los Angeles County, and I am writing to ask that you create one.

Males, as many of us know, are often uncomfortable discussing the issues that affect them as men, from divorce and custody issues to sex matters to overall health issues. This discomfort unfortunately takes a toll on their health and well-being. Every year, for example, thousands of men die unnecessarily of prostate or testicular cancer even though preventative screening could have saved their lives. Many men do not even know what a prostate is or how to self-check for testicular cancer.

The Commission for Women has successfully raised awareness about breast cancer by, among other things, promoting a yearly run/walk for breast cancer in Los Angeles. This I strongly applaud. At the same time, there also is a yearly run/walk for prostate cancer. But far less people know about it. A Commission for Men could be extremely helpful in promoting this event and in raising awareness about other critical issues that affect men and boys.

A Commission for Men might also build a shelter for men, gay or straight, who are victims of domestic violence. It could also help diversify our understanding of the male experience and even help reduce the prison, homeless, institutionalized and suicide populations, which are primarily male. The need for a Commission for Men is becoming increasingly obvious.

I would be pleased to see Los Angeles County create a Commission for Men and would happily provide my own input and advice as needed. Please have somebody inform me about whether such a plan exists and, if not, what it would entail. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Ruben Alvarez, M.D.
Internal Medicine

CC: Zev Yaroslavsky, Gloria Molina, Don Knabe, Yvonne Burke