



OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

TO: Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk

FROM: Councilmember Manny Pelaez, Council District 8 & Councilmember Adriana Rocha Garcia, Council District 4

COPIES: Erik Walsh, City Manager; Andy Segovia, City Attorney; Joe Frank Picazo, Interim Assistant to the City Manager; Emily McGinn, Assistant to the City Council

SUBJECT: Public Health & Healthcare Commission

DATE: July 24, 2024

Issue for Proposed Consideration

After coordinating this Council Consideration Request (CCR) with the City Manager, I respectfully request for your support for the inclusion of the following item on the agenda of the earliest available meeting of the Governance Committee:

Requesting consideration of Public Health & Healthcare Commission

Brief Background

San Antonio's healthcare and public health ecosystem is unique to our region. Ours is a city that boasts a long history of cutting-edge military medicine, many bio-med researchers who help develop new life-saving pharmaceuticals, best-in-class trauma care, prosthetics and medical device innovation, healthcare education, and public health programs. **With that in mind, San Antonio should strive to be the healthiest city in the United States.**

However, we face many challenges that continue to impede our success. The challenges that impact us profoundly include the diabetes epidemic among local Latinos and African Americans, increasing rates of dementia, an increasingly older population, the changing nature of post-COVID mental health, a deficit of community education, environmental stressors, an increasing need for state-of-the-art healthcare facilities, lack of health insurance coverage, an unacceptably high infant mortality rate, inability to access expensive pharmaceuticals, and inadequate preparedness for future shocks to our healthcare systems (eg. future pandemics or catastrophic weather events).

As our city continues to grow, and as public health and healthcare leaders are rushing to meet the challenges that burden too many of our residents, a commission such as the one proposed is vital. It is time for us to fashion and adopt a consensus-driven, data-informed, and interdisciplinary strategy to address the public health and healthcare-related problems we face and the opportunities to solve for them.



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The Public Health and Healthcare Commission's staff liaison should be the Director of San Antonio's Metro Health District. It should be comprised of City Council appointees who represent the various stakeholders and sectors who can bring their perspectives, expertise, experience, and resources to focus on improving our city's health resilience.

Request

Creation of a Public Health and Healthcare Commission. Appointees should include healthcare providers, higher education professionals, community health advocates, public health researchers, and mental health experts, the Bexar County Medical Society, and include a representative from San Antonio City Council.

The commission should be tasked with:

1. Publishing and presenting an annual report on the status of public health and healthcare;
2. Developing and proposing a comprehensive public health and healthcare strategy for City Council's adoption;
3. Advising San Antonio's Metro Health District other city departments/agencies, delegate agencies, and other community organizations to better coordinate and improve health related goals, services, and outcomes;
4. Coordinating with and learning from subject matter experts throughout the world to bring more knowledge of public health and healthcare best practices to our community;
5. Collaborating with economic and workforce development organizations to better align their efforts with our healthcare community so that they more effectively serve residents' health needs.
6. Seeking input from all sectors and community groups that are impacted from public health challenges and that need improved healthcare services;
7. Advocating for policy improvements to better serve the current and future needs of our most vulnerable populations;
8. Research ways to incentivize healthcare practitioners serving in vulnerable areas;
9. Focus on the importance of health literacy, taking into account the city's language access plan;
10. Support in creating a comprehensive strategy for a medical center in the Southside; and
11. Research how the digital divide affects vulnerable populations that may have decreased access to telehealth.



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Submitted for Council consideration by:

Councilmember Manny Pelaez, District 8

Councilmember Adriana Rocha Garcia, District 4

Supporting Councilmembers' Signatures

District

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