



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 3

Agenda Date: October 16, 2024

In Control: Governance Committee Meeting

DEPARTMENT: Health Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Claude Jacob

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Council Consideration Request to create a Public Health & Healthcare Commission.

SUMMARY:

Council Consideration Request by Councilmember Manny Pelaez (District 8) & Councilmember Adriana Rocha Garcia (District 4) on the creation of a Public Health & Healthcare Commission.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On July 24, 2024, Councilmember Manny Pelaez and Councilmember Adriana Rocha Garcia submitted a Council Consideration Request (CCR) to create a Public Health & Healthcare Commission. The CCR requests that City Staff explore options to create the commission to support San Antonio's healthcare and public health landscape, which is distinctive and characterized by a rich history in military medicine, biomedical research, trauma care, and medical innovation. Despite these strengths, the city currently faces significant challenges, including high diabetes rates among Latinos and African Americans, rising dementia cases, an aging population, post-

COVID mental health issues, inadequate community education, environmental stressors, insufficient healthcare facilities, lack of insurance, high infant mortality, and limited access to expensive medications.

The CCR also states that San Antonio should strive to become the healthiest city in the U.S. This commission is also requested to be led by the Director of Metro Health and to include City Council appointees from various sectors to offer diverse perspectives and expertise. This approach, according to the CCR, would support the development of a data-driven, consensus-based strategy to improve the city's health resilience.

ISSUE:

The CCR requests that appointees should include healthcare providers, higher education professionals, community health advocates, public health researchers, mental health experts, the Bexar County Medical Society and a representative from City Council. The commission should be tasked with the following requests:

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 efforts with the 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, considering the city's language access plan.
10. Support in creating a comprehensive strategy for a medical center in the Southside.
11. Research how the digital divide affects vulnerable populations that may have decreased access to telehealth.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that one of the appointees is a staff member from Metro Health. Staff recommends this CCR be referred to the Community Health Committee for further consideration.