



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:
{{item.tracking_number}}

Agenda Item Number: 4

Agenda Date: February 28, 2025

In Control: Community Health Committee

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. During this briefing Metro Health along with University Health and the newly established Center for Health Equity in South Texas will provide highlights of current initiatives that address San Antonio's health needs.

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. According to the CCR, this approach would support the development of a data-driven, consensus-based strategy to improve the city's health resilience.

In October 2024, the Governance Committee recommended that the Community Health Committee review the CCR for further discussion.

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. Publish and present an annual public health and healthcare report.
2. Develop and propose a comprehensive public health and healthcare strategy for City Council.
3. Advise Metro Health, city departments, agencies, and community organizations to improve health outcomes.
4. Collaborate with global experts to bring public health best practices to the community.
5. Align healthcare efforts with economic and workforce development to better serve residents.
6. Seek input from sectors and groups affected by public health challenges and healthcare needs.
7. Advocate for policies that address the needs of vulnerable populations.
8. Research incentives for healthcare practitioners in underserved areas.
9. Promote health literacy, aligned with the city's language access plan.
10. Support the creation of a medical center strategy for the Southside.
11. Research how the digital divide impacts vulnerable populations' access to telehealth.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Not applicable.

ALTERNATIVES:

Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends providing regular updates to the Community Health Committee that address the tasks outlined in the Council Consideration Request.