

**COMMUNITY HEALTH AND EQUITY
COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING
MAY 27, 2021 2:00PM
VIDEOCONFERENCE**

Members Present:	Councilmember Ana Sandoval, Chair, <i>District 7</i> Councilmember Robert Treviño, <i>District 1</i> Councilmember Jada Andrews-Sullivan, <i>District 2</i> Councilmember Rebecca Viagran, <i>District 3</i> Councilmember Shirley Gonzales, <i>District 5</i>
Staff Present:	Dr. Colleen Bridger, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Monica Hernandez, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Alma Lozano, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Tina Flores, <i>City Clerk</i> ; David Newman, <i>Director, Solid Waste Management Department</i> ; Dr. Anita Kurian, <i>Assistant Director, Metro Health Department</i> ; Douglas Melnick, <i>Director, Office of Sustainability</i> ; Nancy Cano, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>
Others Present:	George Hernandez, <i>President & CEO, University Health</i> ; Dr. Robert Leverage, <i>Chief Medical Officer, UT Health San Antonio</i> ; Major General Jimmie Keenan, <i>Senior Vice President of Enterprise Clinic Operations, WellMed</i> ; Josephine Valencia, <i>Deputy Director, Solid Waste Management Department</i> ; Elizabeth Lutz, <i>Executive Director, Health Collaborative</i> ; Jordan McIlveen, <i>Data Analyst, Health Collaborative</i>

Call to order

Chairwoman Sandoval called the meeting to order.

Public Comment

None.

1. Approval of the meeting minutes from the March 25, 2021 Community Health and Equity Committee Meeting.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan moved to approve the minutes for the March 25, 2021 Community Health & Equity Council Committee meeting. Councilmember Viagran seconded the motion. The motion prevailed unanimously by those present.

2. Approval of the meeting minutes from the March 29, 2021 Community Health and Equity Committee Meeting.

Councilmember Viagran moved to approve the minutes for the March 29, 2021 Community Health & Equity Council Committee meeting. Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan seconded the motion. The motion prevailed unanimously by those present.

3. Briefing on the Community-wide COVID-19 vaccination efforts. [Anita K. Kurian, MBBS, MPH, DrPH, Assistant Director, Health]

George Hernandez commemorated four University Health (UH) employees that died from COVID-19. He noted that they succumbed to the virus before there was a vaccine available and emphasized how important the vaccine was. He reported that UH applied the COVID-19 Vaccine Guiding Principles issued by the State and proactively applied the principles to essential and frontline workers to better benefit and protect the community. He stated that in addition to implementing an online vaccine registration process, UH also established a phone bank for those who could not access the internet. He noted that partnerships with other entities and direct targeting of vulnerable populations were the key approaches in a coordinated registration approach. He reported that as of May 22, 2021, UH had administered over 448,055 vaccines at six UH vaccine sites. Mr. Hernandez noted that vaccine efforts were concentrated in large locations to maximize efficiency and vaccine clinics were held at local pharmacies, colleges and universities. Mr. Hernandez observed that the Wonderland Mall of the Americas proved to be an ideal central location and at its peak, approximately 7,000 vaccine were administered daily.

Dr. Robert Leverage reported that UT Health (UTH) vaccine sites transitioned from administering several thousand vaccines daily to currently only a few hundred daily, similar to other vaccine sites across the City. He stated that UTH downsized its main vaccine hub from the Hurd Auditorium to UTHSA Medical Arts & Research Center (MARC), which was a smaller venue. He reported that UTH had administered over 164,643 vaccines to date and provided demographic data per location. He noted that the UTH vaccine effort targeted high risk populations and mobile vaccine clinics that were deployed to 32 community organizations and over 76 hosted events at homeless shelters, senior centers, mosques, synagogues, and churches. Dr. Leverage added that an important component of the UTH public relations and social media campaign was the posting of over 370 COVID-19 social media stories since September 2020 by over 70 faculty members from its various schools that garnered over 400,000 views.

Councilmember Gonzales joined the meeting at this time.

Major General Jimmie Keenan stated that within one day after meeting with Chairwoman Sandoval and Mr. Hernandez, WellMed set up two vaccination sites at the WellMed/Elvira Cisneros Senior Community Center and the WellMed/Alicia Trevino Lopez Senior Center. She reported that during the initial phase of vaccine registration, WellMed received a tremendous amount of phone calls and now only received approximately 20 calls a day. She stated that the Lopez Center finished administering second doses last week and preparations were now underway to safely reopen it for seniors. She added that the Trevino Center would complete second dosing at the end of June and would prepare for reopening for seniors quickly thereafter.

Major General Keenan reported that WellMed had administered over 285,000 COVID-19 vaccines and 95% were in Texas, with the majority of doses distributed in San Antonio. She provided demographic data per WellMed location. She added that WellMed had begun administering vaccines at community events hosted by partner entities, Carvajal Pharmacies, and other pharmacy and clinic partners. She presented a list of upcoming community events where WellMed would provide pop-up vaccine clinics.

Dr. Anita Kurian reported that Metro Health had two vaccination efforts: 1) Mass COVID-19 vaccination site at the Alamodome, which was primarily a drive-through operation with a walk-up component; and 2) Community and Mobile Clinics. She stated that the current no-show rate for second doses at the Alamodome was approximately 90% for first doses and 10%-12% for second doses; and as a result of this

common downward trend, the Alamodome would modify its vaccine schedule and open only on Wednesdays through Fridays from 12:00 PM to 8:00 PM. She noted that vaccine supplies now far exceeded demand due to a combination of vaccine apathy and vaccine hesitancy. Dr. Kurian reported that over 190,000 vaccines were administered at the Alamodome to date, with slightly over 1,300 doses given to children 12-15 years of age.

Dr. Kurian explained that convenience would be the key to getting the next round of residents vaccinated, and Metro Health and its partners had transitioned to community clinics and mobile clinics over the past two weeks. She announced that no prior registration would be required at any clinics or events hosted by Metro Health. She reported that over 135 pop-up clinics administered over 10,000 vaccines; 34 worksite clinics administered 1,413 vaccines; homebound vaccinations were 10,268; and outreach to independent school districts and charter schools were underway.

Dr. Kurian stated that as of May 24, 2021, approximately 47% (784,115) of vaccine-eligible Bexar County residents were fully vaccinated and approximately 60.6% of Bexar County residents received at least one dose. She provided demographic data and cited the biggest success was among the 85% of seniors aged 75 or older that had received at least one dose. She emphasized that ensuring high and equitable vaccination coverage in all populations, regardless of geographic location, age group, or ethnicity was critical to present the spread of COVID-19 and putting an end to the pandemic locally and nationwide.

Dr. Kurian reported that Metro Health launched an elaborate COVID-19 vaccination campaign, purchased traditional advertising on all local major TV stations, radio, and print ads that were promoted during primetime daytime programming and peak radio drive times in both English and Spanish. She added that other messaging efforts included outdoor signage at pop-up locations, health kiosks at Walmarts, video ads, jukebox ads, paid social media ads, and a Fiesta medal giveaway incentive campaign. Dr. Kurian stressed that over 90% of Bexar County residents had a vaccination site located within 5 miles of their homes.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan noted that many Council District 2 residents were followers of KCHL Praise Radio and recommended that COVID-19 vaccine locations and times be promoted on this popular local radio station. Dr. Kurian stated that outreach to KCHL would be made to connect local listeners with vaccine information.

Councilmember Viagran requested that Metro Health continue to provide this Committee with updated lists of Fiesta vaccine events and Fiesta-themed vaccine clinics.

Councilmember Gonzales asked if there was an increase in COVID-19 rates in local schools for children younger than 16 years old that were still not eligible for the vaccine. Dr. Kurian reported that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that COVID-19 cases among children were mild and not as frequent as the documented cases for older children and adults.

Chairwoman Sandoval asked if pop-up vaccine clinics could be requested through 3-1-1. Dr. Kurian reported that residents could contact 3-1-1 for information on pop-up vaccine events and the Metro Health posted vaccine events on its website. She indicated that if a location or community organization wished to host a pop-up vaccine clinic, they could email their request to covid-19@sanantonio.gov and a clinic could be set up within the same week.

4. Briefing on the COVID-19 Research Grants Project administered and managed by the partnership of The Health Collaborative and Metro Health. [Anita K. Kurian, MBBS, MPH, DrPH, Assistant Director, Metro Health]

Dr. Elizabeth Lutz reported that in May 2020, the City of San Antonio received \$270 million from the \$150 billion national Coronavirus Relief Fund, also known as CARES Act funds, and allocated \$500,000 of those funds in support of local community research projects. She stated that Metro Health asked the Health Collaborative (HC) to administer the funds and it was awarded 5 community-based research projects with a goal to better understand the impact of COVID-19. She presented the short timeline of the grant process which began with the release of a Request for Proposal and a Selection Committee review in August 2020, with research findings released in January 2021.

Jordan McIlveen stated that the purpose of the Children's Rehabilitation Institute TeletonUSA (CRIT) Project was to describe the experiences of parents of children with special needs during the COVID-19 Pandemic with a goal to amplify the voices of those from a primarily Hispanic/Latinx background, as more than 85% of the online survey participants identified as Hispanic/Latino. She reported that several themes emerged from the focus group data which revealed that many of the families experienced increased financial insecurity, exacerbated caregiver burdens, and chronic fear over their child's comorbidities as they struggled with the decision to send their child back to school or to school from home. She indicated that telemedicine was a strong point for the families due to its convenience factor. She highlighted that families with challenges with unemployment, evictions, or that had children with disabilities could benefit from ongoing telemedicine resources and noted CRIT was adopting telemedicine as a permanent option for families.

Ms. McIlveen reported that Community Information Now (CI:NOW) compiled and analyzed data that shed light on the differences in how COVID-19 affected Bexar County neighborhoods and groups of people in terms of health, income, climate, business, housing, and other community priorities. She stated that the study tracked COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, deaths, and vaccinations by census tract levels and zip codes which revealed several positive correlations: Older Hispanic adults had more COVID-19 related hospitalizations; Residents aged 25 years and older with less than a high school education had higher rates of COVID-19 cases; and Residents experiencing poverty had a higher number of COVID-19 related deaths. She conveyed that CI:NOW encouraged local agencies to access their online tool and utilize their research data, graphs, and charts for advocacy and grant writing.

Ms. McIlveen stated that Martinez Street Women's Center's (MSWC) COVID-19 Undocufund Emergency Assistance Program worked with families that had one or more members that were undocumented. She explained that MSWC research focused on the barriers undocumented immigrants faced accessing emergency assistance. She reported that most clients were female and most went directly to MSWC for assistance because of its deep-rooted ties within the local community. She noted that food, rent, and utility cleaning supplies were the most requested needs, and families experienced challenges with language barriers and extensive paperwork requirements. She highlighted future opportunities to target other emergency assistance and resources toward females, and for advocacy, educational assistance, and financial relief opportunities as needed regarding landlord/tenant conflicts and the eviction process.

Ms. McIlveen reported that UTHSC-ReACH Center conducted an ongoing study on Quality of Life of Perceived Needs of Survivors of COVID-19 Infection. She stated that findings revealed health-related quality of life was generally compromised overall as follows:

- Concerns with ongoing COVID-19-related health impacts: 65%
- Trouble concentrating: 50%
- Unable to work: 20%
- Serious financial problems: 22%
- Insufficient income to pay:
 - Rent: 24%
 - Gas: 15%
 - Food: 21%
 - Medications: 10%
- Family conflicts: 23%
- Drinking more: 25%

Ms. McIlveen noted that Hispanics/Latinx reported worse health-related quality of life than non-Hispanics/Latinx regarding anxiety, depression, sleep disturbance, and cognitive function abilities. She indicated that Respondents revealed that additional resources would be helpful to access to healthcare, vaccinations, and to cover essential expenses (food, housing, bills).

Ms. McIlveen stated that UTSA–Department of Civil Environmental Engineering utilized a wastewater-based epidemiology (WBE) approach to extrapolate the viral load in municipal wastewater and collected the aggregate data to determine the effectiveness of health risk assessments and mitigation measures. She reported two key findings from the study: 1) SARS-CoV-2 RNA concentrations measured compared well with publicly-reported data on daily positive COVID-19 cases in Bexar County; and 2) A reported increase in COVID-19 cases and wastewater SARS-CoV-2 RNA levels after holiday weekends would provide considerable advance notice of infection dynamics that could warrant special public health interventions. She noted that the data was an invaluable resource for authorities to map spots of disease spread, assess trends, and prompt interventions, particularly in small communities. She added that UTSA was continuing this project to detect potential UK and Brazilian COVID-19 variants in Bexar County.

Dr. Lutz reported that HC created a website where all project research information was housed and the site would be updated regularly. She stated that the information was vital in forming strategies for outreach and expansion and connecting with local communities. She added that HC also conducted county-wide needs assessment and would revise the last Community Health Improvement Plan in conjunction with Metro Health with a final publication to be released in 2022.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked if MSWC provided their clients to resources such as the Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (TRLA) - Free Legal Services Program, or to any kind of legal immigration service providers. She asked how many MSWC families received financial assistance through the Neighborhood Housing Services Department (NHSD) and she requested available data on vulnerable families that still needed assistance. Dr. Lutz confirmed that the role of MSWC was to serve as broker with a full understanding of all available community resources and eligibility requirements, and was a leader in such efforts. She stated that she would provide data on any NHSD financial assistance received by MSWC families. Assistant City Manager Dr. Colleen Bridger stated that she would provide available data on families that still needed assistance.

Chairwoman Sandoval noted that Metro Health and partner agencies were provided with HC Research data well in advance of today's meeting and asked if the entities were able to build on that data early on to inform their work. She asked if other programs that could be evaluated with Federal CARES Act funding. Dr. Kurian reported that Metro Health and partners had great interest in the study of long-terms

effects of COVID-19 and included that data in a new Health Disparities Grant. Dr. Bridger confirmed that other programs could be evaluated and would provide the information.

Councilmember Treviño asked of the number of CRIT families that applied for or knew of the City's Emergency Housing Assistance Plan (EHAP), how many had received crisis funding through CRIT and what was the average CRIT amount awarded. He requested that MSWC present their survey findings at the next Culture & Neighborhood Services Council Committee meeting in June 2021. Ms. McIlveen stated that she would provide the information.

Dr. Lutz reported that the community partners were provided with a funding allocation to assist families when there was an emergency or immediate need and not to replace services that may have been provided by CARES Act funding. She explained that a review of survey responses could determine when and if a family received funding assistance; beyond that, coordination with CRIT could provide any further documentation of connecting the families to longer term solutions, such as EHAP.

5. Briefing on the ReWorksSA commercial recycling program. [David McCary, Assistant City Manager; David Newman, Director, Solid Waste Management Department]

Josephine Valencia reported that the ReWorksSA Commercial Recycling Program was launched by the Solid Waste Management Department (SWMD) in 2018 as a strategic plan to meet the goals of the City's Recycling and Resource Recovery Plan adopted by City Council in 2010. She stated that the goal of ReWorksSA was to improve recycling opportunities for local businesses by assisting with the development and implementation of a recycling program, which included a review of businesses' waste streams to determine recycling opportunities, provide technical assistance, and recycling containers for small to mid-size businesses at no cost. She noted that the Program recognized businesses for their recycling efforts through Bronze, Silver, and Gold Certification levels, and reported there were currently 130 certified businesses. Ms. Valencia indicated that the Program was positively received by local businesses and had won several prestigious awards for marketing efforts.

Ms. Valencia stated that in an effort to build the Program and encourage more sustainable efforts, SWMD collaborated with the Office of Sustainability to enhance the program with additional goals that aligned with the City's Climate Action & Adaptation Plan (CAAP). She reported that the Program now contained additional certification criteria focused on energy, water, transportation, and environmental policies. She announced that the 2021 Pinnacle Award Certification Program was a new award level set to launch on June 1, 2021 and was based on a point system for best industry practices in a variety of subject areas. She added that the ReWorksSA website had undergone multiple upgrades, including a new certification guide that described in detail how businesses could qualify for the Pinnacle Award. Ms. Valencia stated that the marketing and outreach plan included traditional advertising in the San Antonio Business Journal and the SA Express-News along with prospecting and networking strategies.

Chairwoman Sandoval requested further information on how businesses could achieve certification points. Ms. Valencia explained that there were over 200 different questions and categories for various industry best practices and a certain minimum number of points were required for the recycling industry. She added that the Pinnacle Award related to points earned for CAAP and energy conservation best practices.

Councilmember Treviño asked how the Program could collaborate with the local chapters of the Associated General Contractors of Texas, the American Institute of Architects, and the Texas Society of Professional Engineers with regard to lead and construction waste and recyclables.

Councilmember Gonzales asked if quarterly community document shredding events could be scheduled. Ms. Valencia state that SWMD was exploring a budgeting improvement opportunity to host four community shredding events next year. David Newman added that Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan recently submitted a Council Consideration Request (CCR) regarding shredding and SWMD would submit a budget improvement proposal for the CCR.

Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:56 PM.



Ana Sandoval, Chair

Respectfully Submitted,



Nancy Cano, Office of the City Clerk