

City of San Antonio



Minutes

Community Health, Environment, and Culture Committee

2021 – 2023 Council Members

Ana Sandoval, Dist. 7

Mario Bravo, Dist. 1 | Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2

Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3 | Teri Castillo, Dist. 5

Thursday, August 25, 2022

2:00 PM

Municipal Plaza Building

The Community Health, Environment, and Culture Committee convened a regular meeting in the Norma S. Rodriguez Council Chamber in the Municipal Plaza Building beginning at 2:09 PM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

Members Present: Ana Sandoval, *Chair*
Mario Bravo, *Member*
Phyllis Viagran, *Member*
Teri Castillo, *Member*

Members Absent: Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, *Member*

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of minutes for the August 9, 2022, Community Health, Environment, and Culture meeting.

Councilmember Viagran moved to Approve the minutes of the August 9, 2022 Community Health, Environment, and Culture meeting. Councilmember Castillo seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Sandoval, Bravo, Viagran, Castillo

Absent: McKee-Rodriguez

Public Comments

There were no Public Comments.

Briefing and Possible Action on

2. The City's communicable disease response and preparedness by Metro Health staff. [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Claude A. Jacob, Director, Metro Health]

Claude Jacob, Director of Metro Health, opened the Item and introduced Dr. Anita Kurian who provided an update on the COVID-19 Pandemic and Monkeypox. Dr. Kurian reported 622,858 total cases of COVID which had decreased since the first week of August 2022 mostly due to 73.4% of the population being fully vaccinated. The City had been at the High Risk Level for the past five weeks with recommended prevention strategies: wear mask indoors in public, get tested if symptomatic, additional precautions for persons at high risk of severe illness, and stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations.

Dr. Kurian displayed the most recent SARS-CoV-2 Whole Genome Sequencing Surveillance Dashboard. She reported that anyone age 6 months and older was eligible for the vaccine, provided a list of the approved and authorized vaccine types as well as the vaccine schedule. Dr. Kurian reported that on August 12, 2022, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) provided updated guidance that shifted to the nation learning to live with COVID-19 in a safe manner. She provided information about the new booster vaccinations being made available soon for the Omicron BA.4/5 variant.

Dr. Kurian stated that the Monkeypox Virus was in the same virus family as Smallpox and was discovered in 1958, with the first human case in 1970 and the disease was endemic in west and central Africa. She provided a map of the cases across the globe and stated that cases were being seen in the United States, Spain, Brazil, Germany and the United Kingdom which were non-endemic countries.

Dr. Kurian reported 1,281 Monkeypox cases in Texas with only 25 in Bexar County, noting that 99% of the cases were in men with 94% of cases reporting recent male-to-male sexual or intimate contact and 41% of the case patients were HIV positive. She stressed that anyone could acquire or spread Monkeypox through close skin-to-skin contact from the time symptoms start until the rash had fully healed and a fresh layer of skin had formed (4 to 6 weeks). Dr. Kurian added that symptoms usually began with flu-like symptoms, then progressed to rashes that looked like pimples or blisters.

Dr. Kurian listed risky activities, transmission methods, ways to prevent the disease, what to do if someone had or was exposed to Monkeypox, and the currently authorized vaccines but noted that the vaccines were in limited supply. She outlined approved medicines to treat Monkeypox and stated that Metro Health had an inventory of those medications. She reported that Metro Health was performing surveillance, testing, case confirmation and providing access to vaccines for those in the priority groups, access to treatment, coordination with local health providers and awareness campaigns.

Councilmember Castillo recommended a comparison of other cities similar in size to San

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with regard to COVID-19 vaccination rates and the impacts on their populations. Councilmember Castillo requested a status of the vaccination incentive gift cards. Dr. Kurian stated that all the gift cards had been distributed.

Councilmember Viagran asked if there was a plan for the distribution of the new booster. Dr. Kurian stated that it was expected to be widely available at public health clinics, doctor's offices and pharmacies. Councilmember Viagran recommended a marketing campaign by Metro Health related to the new booster.

No action was required for Item 2.

3. **Metro Health response to the Council Consideration Request requiring that schools and universities which receive city funding ensure instruction on family violence, child abuse, and human trafficking.** [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Claude A. Jacob, Director, Metro Health]
4. **Metro Health response to the Council Consideration Requests requiring domestic violence and sex trafficking prevention signage at places of public accommodation, and amplifying awareness of these subjects through City touchpoints.** [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Claude A. Jacob, Director, Metro Health]

Items 3 and 4 were presented and discussed together.

Claude Jacob, Director of Metro Health, provided statistics related to domestic violence and human trafficking in Texas and San Antonio. Jacob gave background on the Council Consideration Requests (CCRs) and reported that Metro Health had conducted research, created and launched an information and education campaign and provided immediate response and intervention.

Jacob stated that four additional positions were included in the FY 2022 Budget for the programs and he described the related goals and metrics. He reported that Metro Health distributed 10,000 decals to interested partners and stakeholders, created the "Love Is..." and Purple Porch community awareness campaigns, developed a new webpage, provided presentations and reports, and hosted an annual Collaborative Commission on Domestic Violence (CCDV) Domestic Violence Symposium. Jacob added that Metro Health planned to partner with the City Attorney's Office to develop signage that could be posted in public spaces.

Jacob stated that a State bill was passed requiring written consent for students to participate in the programs that were approved by City Ordinance to provide domestic violence education in schools, colleges and universities and Metro Health was focused on developing a school criteria and had developed the Triple P Parenting Program.

Councilmember Viagran asked about the partnerships and suggested that there should be an incentive for businesses to participate but needed more information about the costs to small businesses before she was ready to support an Ordinance requiring signage and cautioned that unintended consequences needed to be considered related to a compulsory program for businesses. Councilmember Viagran acknowledged that the State essentially usurped the City's ability to work in the schools but wanted more information on what could be accomplished.

Chair Sandoval stated that she thought that the recommendation pertained only to businesses that had contracts with the City. Jacob clarified that the recommendation was for all businesses within the city limits as well as those under contract. Chair Sandoval requested a cost estimate for the businesses and asked if staff had determined the legal feasibility of an Ordinance. Jacob confirmed that the requirement for posting of information was legally allowable. Erica Haller-Stevenson, Public Health Administrator, added that the City was allowed to require posting of information under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant and other contracts, however, Metro Health did not support publicizing the patient centered mobile service offered by the Fire Department because 911 was the only way the team could be accessed.

Councilmember Castillo asked where the signage would be placed. Jacob stated they would be placed in bathrooms. Haller-Stevenson recommended placement in a location where a victim could safely review the information which would require some private place away from the abuser. Councilmember Castillo recommended requiring them to be placed in the men's restroom as well as the women's and that Metro Health laminate the signs so that they were not obscured by folding.

Jacob recommended more feedback and a focus group to gather more information including from small businesses regarding the signage.

Councilmember Viagran commented that there was a national program already underway that provided information in truck stops and suggested seeking grant opportunities for the program.

Chair Sandoval closed the discussion by recommending that the signs be posted at City Hall.

No action was required for Items 3 and 4.

5. The Community Response and Equity Coalition program and recent recognition. [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Claude A. Jacob, Director, Metro Health]

Claude Jacob, Director of Metro Health, thanked the City team for their excellence that led to the award and thanked the Mayor and City Council for their support. Jacob announced that Metro Health had been awarded the 2022 Innovative Practice Gold Award from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). The application was titled "Public Health is a Team Sport: COVID 19 Community Response and Equity Coalition" and recognized the work of the entire City team to create the COVID-19 website and the self-screening online tool, mobile vaccination sites, testing sites, and the mega vaccination site at the Alamodome. He added that Metro Health used the Equity Index as a guide for testing and vaccination sites and collaborated on media campaigns. Jacob played a video that further explained the components of the program that made the award possible.

Chair Sandoval asked how the group would be integrated into the SA Forward Plan. Jacob stated that the work would continue and was a significant component of the ongoing work of Metro Health.

Councilmember Castillo commented how housing intersected with health and mental health impacts

and thanked the team for their work.

Councilmember Viagran acknowledged that Metro Health answered the call to develop a vaccine distribution site on the southside when Council Districts 3, 4 and 7 requested it at the beginning of the pandemic. Chair Sandoval recognized that Dr. Kurian spearheaded the effort. Dr. Kurian stated that it was a team effort and appreciated the Councilwoman's enthusiasm.

Jacob stated that he was proud of the work and thanked the Committee, led by Chair Sandoval, for being their cheerleader.

No action was required for Item 5.

Chair Sandoval thanked Councilmember Viagran for her support as Chair ProTem.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 3:31 PM.

Approved

Ana Sandoval, Chair

Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk