



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:
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Agenda Item Number: 3

Agenda Date: October 26, 2023

In Control: Community Health Committee

DEPARTMENT: Health Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Claude Jacob

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Briefing on “Access to Health Care in Bexar County during COVID-19,” a report commissioned in 2022 by Metro Health and performed by the Bexar County Health Collaborative (Metro Health).

SUMMARY:

Metro Health will provide a briefing on changes in access to health care in Bexar County from 2020-2022. The briefing will include results of an SA Speak Up survey, partner surveys, public database information, focus groups and key informant interviews.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

As a nationally accredited health department, Metro Health’s role includes assessing and monitoring population health. In 2022, Metro Health commissioned the Bexar County Health Collaborative to assess changes in access to health care during the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020-2022. The Health Collaborative collaborated with CI:NOW, C3HIE, UTSA and UT School

of Public Health in this effort, which was a part of SA Forward, Metro Health’s strategic direction through 2026.

Bright spots included continuous Medicaid enrollment and policy changes that increased access to telehealth and ACA Marketplace plans. Pop-up clinics took health care into people’s neighborhoods, new partnerships sprang up among organizations, and our society recognized the importance of Community Health Workers and social determinants of health.

Negative findings included fear of catching an illness at a doctor’s office, challenges in obtaining an appointment and in affording prescriptions. Databases showed decreased kindergartner vaccination rates, increases in drug-related deaths and death by suicide, and limited access to ob-gyn and mental health care in large swaths of the city. Focus groups and interviews highlighted that staff shortages and turnover undermined quality of care, that transportation and language barriers remain substantial, and that care and prescription costs continue to rise.

Metro Health is disseminating this information in the community in Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 with a goal of aligning and focusing collaborative efforts to close gaps prioritized by the community.

ISSUE:

Metro Health will brief the Community Health Committee on the “Access to Health Care in Bexar County during COVID-19” report.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact at this time.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.