



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 4

Agenda Date: August 25, 2022

In Control: Community Health, Environment and Culture Committee

DEPARTMENT: Health Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Claude Jacob

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

An update on the Council Consideration Requests for requiring domestic violence and sex trafficking prevention signage at places of public accommodation, as well as amplifying awareness of these subjects through City touchpoints.

SUMMARY:

Metro Health would like to provide updates to the Council Consideration Requests filed by Councilmember Manny Pelaez on October 18, 2021. The first request asked City staff to draft an ordinance requiring all places of public accommodation display in bathrooms clearly visible signage featuring domestic violence and sex trafficking prevention resources. The second request asked to amplify awareness about domestic violence and sex trafficking prevention through City and City-related touchpoints.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Metro Health presented on these Council Consideration Requests at the Governance Committee meeting on January 11, 2022. The Department recommended sending the responses to the Community, Health, Equity, and Culture Committee (CHECC) for further review and Metro Health presented to the Committee on March 8, 2022. The Community, Health, Equity and Culture Committee had several inquiries and asked Metro Health to provide updates at the next Committee meeting.

As a part of the FY22 approved budget, Metro Health was given additional funding to support an expansion of the Domestic Violence Program. The expansion includes four primary initiatives:

- Crisis Response Team Victim Advocate program expansion
- Domestic Violence Case Management expansion
- Enhanced Domestic Violence Evaluation and Data-driven Strategies
- Expanded Community Education Initiatives

ISSUE:

The CHECC requested Metro Health research ways to amplify awareness about domestic violence and human trafficking by focusing on two efforts: 1) an ordinance requiring domestic violence and sex trafficking resource signage be posted in clear and easy to understand language to help victims know immediately where and how to seek help, and 2) amplify domestic violence and sex trafficking awareness and resources by activating city departments and city-related touchpoints for transmission.

State law already requires certain entities, such as massage parlors, hair and nail salons, and tattoo studios; and lodging establishments, including hotels and motels; as well as transportation hubs, including airports, bus stations and train stations, primary and secondary public and private schools to post signage about human trafficking awareness (Senate Bills 800 and 1831 and House Bills 390 and 3721, 87th Legislature, 2021, Regular Session). New signage required under a COSA ordinance would complement existing signage on human trafficking and add domestic violence signage to promote awareness of the issues and access to resources.

Metro Health held a focus group in May 2022 to review draft domestic violence and human trafficking signage. Of the 12 participants, five were communications professionals, the remainder were public health and nonprofit professionals as well as a representative from the LGBT Chamber of Commerce. See attached executive summary of the key findings of the focus group. A full report is also available.

Metro Health also consulted with San Antonio Fire Department (SAFD) about offering mobile response resources for domestic violence victims through the COSA Mobile Integrated Healthcare Program. SAFD does not have a program focused around this need. SAFD Deputy Chief Estrada explained any future program focused on this need should take a patient-centered approach and consider that mobile response resources could further endanger the safety and welfare of the victim calling for assistance by angering the perpetrator and escalating the situation.

Metro Health met with the City Attorney's Office to discuss compliance and enforcement options

among places of public accommodation.

Accessing information and resources is essential for domestic violence victims to access support when they need it. Metro Health previously distributed 10,000 mirror clings that discretely listed a phone number where victims could call for help.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact at this time.

ALTERNATIVES:

No alternatives are recommended

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends building on current activities by engaging chambers of commerce, nonprofits organizations, faith-based organizations, healthcare and community organizations, in a joint, community-wide effort to promote resources to help prevent domestic violence. The joint effort would include continuing distribution of an updated bilingual decal to be made available to businesses for prominent display (e.g., on mirror, over sink, near towel dispenser) in the bathrooms of places of public accommodation. The revised decal would include a standard message about domestic violence support resources, a 24-hour crisis line phone number, and a QR code leading to a website of key resources. The domestic violence content would complement the public information about human trafficking required to be posted by the State in the same places of public accommodation. The decal, to be produced by the City to ensure standardized content and size, could be retrieved at the One-Stop Center, delivered through food establishment and other facility inspections, and be requested through mail by business operators.

In addition to the awareness efforts, staff recommends an ordinance that requires mandatory compliance of signage posting for business, entities and organizations who contract with the City of San Antonio and operate within its limits. This contractual requirement would be included in every contract the city issues and would require contractors to post and maintained the above-mentioned signage in businesses, office buildings and places of public accommodation operated by the contractor.

Compliance would be monitored through the already-established contracts assessment plans and would include repercussions for contractors should they breach this contract requirement. Exceptions could be included for entities that do not have public accommodations within Bexar County. This requirement would help ensure those entities interested in contracting with the City of San Antonio agree to post signage and promote these important domestic violence resources.