



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

**File Number:**  
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**Agenda Item Number:** 4

**Agenda Date:** October 27, 2022

**In Control:** Community Health, Environment and Culture Committee

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**DEPARTMENT:** Health Department

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** Claude Jacob

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** Citywide

**SUBJECT:**

An update on the proposal for an insulin cost share program for the City of San Antonio and increasing resources for diabetes prevention, self-management and care.

**SUMMARY:**

Metro Health will provide an updated response to the Council Consideration Request filed on January 27, 2022, by Councilman Jalen McKee-Rodriguez (District 2) and Councilwoman Adriana Rocha Garcia (District 4) that directs City staff to determine the feasibility and establishment of a cost-share program to help San Antonio residents cover the cost of insulin.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Metro Health presented on this Council Consideration Request at the Governance Committee meeting on May 25, 2022. The Governance committee recommended sending the response to the Community, Health, Equity, and Culture Committee (CHECC) for further review. Following the

Governance Committee meeting, Metro Health researched evidence-based practices to address diabetes, access to care, and access to prescription drugs within underserved communities in order to establish a model appropriate for the City of San Antonio. Metro Health also reached out to key partners within the community who are providing diabetes care to underserved populations to better understand the best practices and gaps in service. As a result of the research conducted, Metro Health established a Diabetes Care Continuum model of programs and services that will address health disparities within underserved communities and increase access to diabetes care.

## **ISSUE:**

Insulin prices and individual expenditures can vary based on type of insulin and health insurance coverage, ranging from \$0 to \$1,500/year. Nearly 16% of those who require and use insulin pay the full price for their insulin prescription annually. The average medical costs for an individual with diabetes totals \$16,752 annually, 2.3 times higher than the average costs for those without diabetes.

Almost 283,000 San Antonio residents are uninsured. Adequate and affordable health insurance is important for people with diabetes to help them access supplies, medications, education, and health care to manage their diabetes and prevent complications. More than 1.8 million Texans signed up for health insurance in 2022 under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), up 42% from 2021, providing more than 500,000 Texans with marketplace health coverage. Despite record ACA enrollment numbers, Texas remains the state with the highest uninsured rate in the nation and the most uninsured residents. Roughly 1,000 Bexar County residents were hospitalized for Type 1 diabetes in 2020 alone, and of these, more than 1 in 5 had no insurance. Additionally, those uninsured were disproportionately Hispanic.

Sixty-six percent of those diagnosed with diabetes do not use insulin supplementation as a part of their treatment of the disease. They can manage their symptoms through other medications, lifestyle changes and health education. Insulin supplementation is usually recommended only after other treatment options are unsuccessful and not effective.

Diabetes prevention education and diabetes self-management education are research-based interventions that reduce the chances of developing diabetes by 58% and help people with diabetes manage their symptoms and care. Self-Management programs significantly reduce individual medical costs, improve A1c scores and glycemic control, increase health self-efficacy and reduce diabetes-related hospitalization rates.

The Governance Committee recommended that Metro Health staff engage key community partners and stakeholders to obtain their input, suggestions and concerns regarding an insulin cost share program and diabetes care in San Antonio. Based on this feedback, Metro Health would like to propose a Diabetes Care Continuum of programs and services. This continuum model would address the costs of insulin and provide resources and support for those who have diabetes in our community. This proposal aims to assist as many residents as possible in the most efficient and comprehensive way while taking advantage of the many resources that are already available within our community. The continuum has four interacting parts: Patient Navigators & Insulin Safety

Fund, Health Education, Outreach & Advocacy, and Community Partnerships.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Not applicable at this time.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

Please refer to the recommendations section which offers several alternatives.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Metro Health will highlight three options in response to the requests made within the Council Consideration Request for the CHECC and City Council to consider:

A. Maintain the current effort to provide health education through no-cost workshops throughout the community. This is currently funded through grants set to expire in 2027. The program would continue its focus on target districts and providing culturally relevant curricula to reach more residents.

B. Support increased community partnerships and increased outreach and advocacy. This would be an expansion of current collaborations to provide more services and events as highlighted above and hire a dedicated Diabetes Policy Lead Analyst. New funding in the amount of \$600,000 would need to be identified.

C. Support the comprehensive Diabetes Care Continuum model focused on patient navigators, the insulin safety fund, health education, outreach and advocacy and community partnerships. New funding in the amount of \$1,600,000 would need to be identified. Metro Health believes this model best incorporates the feedback given from Council members and the community and gives aid to the greatest amount of people in the most efficient and effective way.