

City of San Antonio



City Council B Session

No in-person access to this meeting

Wednesday, October 7, 2020

2:00 PM

Municipal Plaza Building

ROLL CALL

The City Council convened in a Regular Meeting. City Clerk Tina J. Flores took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Councilmembers present:

PRESENT: 11 - Mayor Nirenberg, Treviño, Andrews-Sullivan, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Gonzales, Cabello Havrda, Sandoval, Pelaez, Courage, and Perry

Once a quorum was established, the City Council shall consider the following:

1. Briefing on the COVID-19 Response and Recovery and Resiliency Plan. [Maria Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; Ana Bradshaw, COVID-19 Financial and Performance Liaison]

Assistant City Manager Colleen Bridger reported that the total case count for COVID-19 was 58,700 as of October 6, 2020. She indicated that the seven-day rolling average was 136 and there were 1,167 total deaths. She stated that it was estimated that 55,800 individuals had recovered and approximately 1,700 individuals current had COVID-19. She provided the following definitions:

- Symptomatic – COVID-19 symptoms present
- Presymptomatic – infectious period prior to symptom onset
- Asymptomatic – no symptoms at any point
- PCR Test – molecular test that detects the presence of genetic material of the virus and amplifies it
- Antigen Test – detects proteins on the surface of the virus
- Confirmed case – laboratory confirmed PCR Test
- Probable case – laboratory confirmed FDA authorized Antigen Test

Dr. Bridger stated that the positivity rate was 4.9% and the testing capacity was three times higher than the current need. She reported that currently there were 219 COVID-19 positive patients in the hospital with 86 of those in the intensive care unit and 38 of those on a ventilator. She added that ventilators were at 70% availability and staffed beds were at 16% availability. She indicated that in school districts, 50 students and 52 staff tested positive for COVID-19 with two outbreaks noted to date.

Dr. Bridger reported that 229 staff were housed at the Alamodome and noted that the majority of furloughed staff had transitioned to permanent positions and the Epidemiology Team had transitioned back to their regular duties. She stated that currently, eight individuals were working on the Community Health and Prevention Team and would increase to 20 individuals in the next two weeks.

Dr. Bridger stated there were 131 Case Investigators from the University of Texas (UT) School of Public Health at the Alamodome. She indicated that from the beginning of the pandemic, Metro Health had subcontracted with a vendor to perform contact tracing and on November 1, 2020, the UT School of Public Health would begin to perform those duties.

Dr. Bridger reported that the COVID-19 Community Response Coalition (CRC) was partnering with stakeholders and community partners to share information about the flu. She indicated that Metro Health had created Vaccine Strike Teams with funding provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for seven full-time staff which would hold community-based flu clinics with partners and stakeholders. She added that the REACH Grant provided funding for two full-time Community Health Workers who would work with the Vaccine Strike Teams to educate the community and to help them connect them to flu clinic events.

Dr. Bridger stated that media campaigns have begun via television/radio commercials, billboards, social media, and the Metro Health Website. She noted that there were 50+ flu clinic through drive-thru and mass flu vaccine clinics in collaboration with Metro Health's Public Health and Emergency Preparedness Program and community partners (one in each quadrant of the city).

Dr. Bridger reported that an internal group in Metro Health met weekly to plan for the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine once it was available. She indicated that staff were coordinating with Metro Health's CRC Enforcement and Education Workgroup to develop vaccine messaging and a communications strategy for targeted audiences. She noted that staff were partnering with private providers throughout the City to ensure that they knew how to enroll in the CDC's COVID-19 Vaccine Program. She stated that weekly calls were held with the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) and the CDC to obtain vaccine-related updates. She added that the COVID-19 Vaccine Plan was due to the CDC by October 16, 2020 and Metro Health planned to utilize large-scale flu clinics as models for COVID-19 vaccine delivery.

Dr. Bridger stated that limited doses of the COVID-19 vaccine could be available by early November 2020, but the supply would increase substantially in 2021. She indicated that the

initial supply would either be approved as a licensed vaccine or authorized for use under Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) issued by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). She added that two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, separated by ≥ 21 or 28 days, would be required for immunity.

Dr. Bridger reported that when the first limited amount of the COVID-19 vaccine was received, it would be prioritized for critical infrastructure (public safety, fire, education, food and agriculture) and essential workers (healthcare workers, EMS, pharmacy and public health). She noted that other groups would be prioritized in the following order:

- Individuals living in group settings
- Individuals at high risk for severe illness or COVID-19 impact
- Individuals with limited access to vaccination services

Dr. Bridger added that recommendations for prioritization of the groups for early vaccination were still in development.

Fire Chief Charles Hood stated that the current SAFD COVID-19 operations included:

- Emergency Operations Center (EOC) partial activation
- New equipment for response vehicles
- MIH and SAFD Blue Team activated
- Management of testing sites
- Intermediate care facilities
- Internal resiliency

Chief Hood reported that from March 1, 2020 to October 1, 2020, over 153,000 tests were collected with 56,943 tested by nasal swab and 96,257 tested utilizing a curative test. He noted that four labs were utilized for public testing with approximately 5,000 tests available daily. He indicated that SAFD was currently operating the Ramirez and Cuellar Community Centers, and the drive-up site at the Freeman Coliseum for testing. He stated that the Curative stand-alone testing sites included the Las Palmas Library, Collins Library, and Sparky's.

Chief Hood stated that the Mobile Integrated Healthcare Team provided:

- Daily assessments at Haven for Hope for residents and new intakes
- Isolation Care Facility
- Metro Health congregate testing in:
 - ❖ Nursing homes
 - ❖ Adult probation
 - ❖ Haven for Hope Acute Care Station
 - ❖ Holiday Inn (Haven for Hope Courtyard Campus)
- Evacuees testing at the Grand Hyatt and Marriott River Walk during hurricane operations
- Metro Health Call Center assistance

Chief Hood reported that the SAFD Blue Team provided: 1) In-home testing through the Metro Health Call Center; 2) City civilian employee testing and convalescence; and 3) SAFD uniformed employee testing and convalescence.

Ana Bradshaw stated that the total Budget for the COVID-19 Emergency Response Community Recovery and Resiliency Plan was \$527.6 million with \$248.7 million of that was allocated to the COVID-19 Community Recovery and Resiliency Plan. She indicated that other allocations included:

- Health Implementation Plan - \$53.5 million
- Airport - \$50.6 million
- EOC, isolation facilities PPE (FEMA) - \$3.9 million
- City eligible payroll and supplies - \$146.5 million
- Other - \$24.4 million

Ms. Bradshaw reported that expenses were on track and the City had spent \$179.3 million since March 2020. She stated that the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) was on target to be expended by December 30, 2020 and as of August 31, 2020, the City had spent \$137.6 million or 51% of the \$270 million CRF. She indicated that the COVID-19 Community Recovery and Resiliency Plan was almost \$1.1 million ahead primarily due to the Emergency Housing Assistance Plan (EHAP). She noted that the Health Implementation Plan (HIP) was on target through August 2020 and the City would continue to balance expenses with State expenses. She added that the State would continue to fund the City's free community tests resulting in a positive impact on our Budget.

Ms. Bradshaw announced that the Emergency Response and COVID-19 Community Recovery and Resiliency Plan would be posted today on the City's COVID-19 Website and would be updated monthly. She added that the next quarterly report on expenditures was due to the Federal Government on October 13, 2020 and was being compiled at this time and the next financial report would be presented to the City Council in November 2020.

City Manager Erik Walsh stated that staff would continue to monitor expenses related to the HIP. He noted that the Community Lab PCR Test would be rolled-out slowly and staff would continue to monitor the EHAP. He indicated that programmatic and outcome updates on the pillars would be shared with the City Council.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked how the City was working with the school districts. Dr. Bridger stated that a team was dedicated to providing technical assistance, monitoring, contact tracing, and mobile testing to school districts.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked who was working on a vaccination distribution plan and she requested to see the plan once it was completed. Dr. Bridger stated that Metro Health was developing a vaccine distribution plan which would be distributed once finalized.

Councilmember Pelaez complimented Dr. Bridger on her work during the COVID-19 Pandemic and the contact tracing operation at the Alamodome.

Councilmember Viagran asked if Metro Health was going to begin counting COVID-19 positive cases resulting from the antigen test. Dr. Bridger stated that beginning tomorrow, Metro Health would begin counting local asymptomatic antigen positive cases.

Councilmember Gonzales asked how a rise in the need for testing would be addressed. Dr. Bridger stated that a number of new laboratories had come online since the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic so there was availability for more tests to be processed if needed.

Councilmember Sandoval asked if the State was paying for tests in dollars or with an in-kind match. Dr. Bridger replied that the State paid for the tests directly to the collection sites, and the laboratories for all costs associated with the testing.

Councilmember Courage complimented everyone involved in the process of protecting the health of citizens.

Councilmember Treviño asked how citizens would be made to feel safe while exercising their voting rights. Dr. Bridger stated that individuals were not required to wear a mask to vote but staff were partnering with Bexar County and the CDC to put safeguards in place specific to COVID-19.

Councilmember Perry expressed support for more assistance to the business community.

Councilmember Sandoval requested an update on projects funded through the EHAP. Dr. Bridger stated that she would provide an update.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Nirenberg announced that the Executive Session would be carried over to October 1, 2020.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Mayor Nirenberg adjourned the meeting at 3:54 pm.

APPROVED

RON NIRENBERG
Mayor

Attest:

TINA J. FLORES
Acting City Clerk

DRAFT