

City of San Antonio



City Council Special Meeting

Webex Meeting – No in-person access to this meeting

Tuesday, May 12, 2020

1:00 PM

Videoconference

ROLL CALL

Acting 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

1. Briefing and updates on the City's COVID-19 response and preparedness and updates on the COVID-19 Community Action Working Groups.

Dr. Dawn Emerick, Metro Health Director, stated that the Testing Task Force (TTF) was operationalized to: 1) WATCH-Monitor the epidemic as the community gradually re-opens; 2) EXPAND-Progressively expand daily testing and contact tracing; and 3) ASSURE-Educate the public, enforce the emergency orders, and ensure testing and contact tracing capacity.

Dr. Emerick noted that the TTF had been meeting since the beginning of February 2020 under the leadership of the Co-Chairs Dr. Barbara Taylor and herself. She stated that as of today the TTF would become the Testing and Tracing Task Force (TTTF) that consisted of the following five workgroups:

1. Indicator Monitoring Workgroup
2. Testing and Lab Reporting Workgroup
3. Contact Tracing Workgroup
4. Enforcement and Education Workgroup
5. Policy and Health Alerts Workgroup

Dr. Emerick noted that each workgroup would be aligned with a member of the community, a leader in the community, and Metro Health Staff. She stated that members of the Indicator Monitoring Workgroup would share the progress indicators and interpret what they meant.

Dr. Emerick noted that Metro Health would promote the COVID-19 Self-Screening website twice a week, through social media and robo-calls until March 2021. She stated that Metro Health would administer a community survey through SASpeakUp, every two weeks, for a total of three months and analyze findings by August 2020.

Dr. Emerick stated that Metro Health was working to increase daily testing capacity to 3,000 per day, as the current daily testing capacity was 1,600 per day. She noted that the capacity would be increased by: conducting a randomized study, offering universal screening/testing, and expanding testing sites. She stated that Metro Health would conduct the study in collaboration with UTSA, University Health System, and the Mobile Integrated Healthcare Program to determine the prevalence of asymptomatic infections. She noted that Metro Health would describe the demographic characteristics of asymptomatic infections and the risk of transmission by July 2020 based on results from the study.

Dr. Emerick stated that Metro Health would conduct universal screening and testing in congregate settings for both symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals at the local and State levels. She noted that Metro Health was expanding testing sites for both symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals within prioritized populations.

Fire Chief Charles Hood stated that in maintaining Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) cache for the City of San Antonio the goal was to collect resources associated with the response to COVID-19 in a centralized location for the management of resources. He noted that equipment and vehicles would be needed for the distribution of PPE to departments throughout the City and respirators required fit testing to comply with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements. He reported the use of decontamination equipment, which was specialized equipment to ensure the sanitation of vehicles and work locations.

Chief Hood reported that the response capacity and capability of the San Antonio Fire Department would be enhanced by:

- Increasing medical resources for Metro Health and SAFD
- Creating a triage and minor emergency line for citizens
- EMS equipment
- Technology equipment

Chief Hood stated that equipment and supplies were needed for: 1) Large scale mobile testing at congregate sites; 2) Deployments for large scale testing; 3) Walk up sites; and 4) Small scale or individual mobile testing.

Chief Hood stated that MIH would be expanded through the training of 100 department personnel for testing, adding positions to MIH for contact tracing teams, and expanding the role of MIH to provide in-home care to prevent the need for hospital admission of COVID-19 patients. He reported that 4,110 tests were completed since February 8, 2020 and 1,120 tests were completed at the Bexar County Jail.

Dr. Emerick stated that Metro Health would recruit, train, and deploy 175 case tracers as new positive cases increased over a period of time beginning on June 1, 2020. She noted that if 70 cases per day were observed then 15 additional case tracers would be trained and if 90 cases per day were observed then the 15 additional case tracers would be deployed.

Dr. Emerick stated that Metro Health and the Information Technology Services Department (ITSD) would complete a 30-day pilot program with Eموcha Mobile Health Technology to monitor positive patients and contacts for signs and symptoms by June 30, 2020.

Dr. Emerick indicated that the Development Services Department (DSD), with the inclusion and cooperation of team members including Metro Health, Center City Development and Operations (CCDO), and SAPD, would inspect 10 businesses per week and educate or administer warnings and citations for violations of the local Public Health Emergency Orders beginning on June 1, 2020.

Dr. Emerick stated that the Community Health and Prevention Team, the COVID-19 community hotline, and provider education would accomplish education and outreach.

Deputy City Manager Maria Villagómez reported that the projected cost for the Health Transition Plan was approximately \$75 million to be funded by federal grants. She noted that staff was finalizing the report to be presented to the Mayor and City Council on May 25, 2020.

Ms. Villagómez stated that an update on the work accomplished for the community, such as assistance to small businesses, levels of government, digital divide, and the other aspects of the plan would be presented on May 20, 2020 with a final report presented to the City Council on June 1, 2020.

Mr. Gordon Hartman reported that five working groups had completed six weeks of work to date. He noted that the last working group meeting would be held next week.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan reported that the Food Security and Shelter Working Group surpassed its goal. She noted that the State of Texas would receive approximately \$9 million in funding for the Food Bank. She thanked Secretary Cisneros and Leilah Powell from Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and noted that traditional and non-traditional resources had been identified. She stated that the Working Group was reviewing how land space could be utilized for affordable housing, and that Councilmember Cabello Havrda would review food deserts and food security.

Councilmember Sandoval stated that the Business and Employment Working Group would encourage private industry and private businesses to purchase locally where possible and the Working Group would receive a progress report from SAWorks and Workforce Solutions Alamo.

Councilmember Treviño reported that the Social Services Working Group would compile recommendations into an operational document which included expansion of the Right to Counsel Program, providing support for undocumented resident resources, recommendations

regarding domestic violence, inclusion of LGBTQ communities, recommendations regarding mental and behavioral health, health care technology, senior services, and attention to substance and child abuse. He stated that items for discussion by the Working Group included asset funding, the digital divide, short and long-term opportunities for government, non-profit, and private sector strategies. He noted that Councilmember Courage would finalize recommendations regarding education.

Councilmember Pelaez stated that the primary goal of the Federal and State Advocacy Working Group was to advocate for additional funding to cover losses and costs associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic. He noted that the Working Group identified grants and discussed the \$13 billion for schools and \$3 billion in block grants to states for connectivity and devices to support distance learning by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). He reported that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services set aside \$250 million for the Head Start Program. He stated that a support letter from City and Bexar County leaders, and CEOs of local companies was sent to Washington, D.C. advocating for flexibility in spending.

Mr. Hartman stated that goals were achieved that was set by the Mayor and the Bexar County Judge.

Mayor Nirenberg stated that a final report would be released in the last week of May 2020.

Councilmember Treviño asked how the City would recover the \$75 million for the Health Transition Plan. Ms. Villagómez replied that the \$75 million would come from the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) from which the Federal Government allocated \$270 million to the City of San Antonio.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked what the state was doing to provide testing to those in Child Protective Services, and homeless youth. Dr. Emerick replied that she would provide that information.

Councilmember Viagran asked how long the additional MIH personnel would be available. Chief Hood replied that existing SAFD staff were trained in MIH and would be available.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked of the results of tests performed at a nursing home. Dr. Emerick stated that she would provide that information.

Councilmember Gonzales asked if the \$75 million was a short-term requirement. Ms. Villagómez replied that it was and would go through March 2021.

City Manager Erik Walsh stated that after March 2021 the State would continue to provide direction and potentially funding for PPE, training, testing, and contact tracing.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked how the survey would be administered. Dr. Emerick replied that the survey would be on Survey Monkey every two weeks for three months. She stated that the survey would be on the website, social media, and on the phone via the hotline. She noted that a group would go out into the community with iPads to complete surveys in

person.

Councilmember Sandoval requested a report on the COVID-19 outbreak at the San Antonio Behavioral Health Hospital to include the testing, cases, timeline, contact tracing, PPE, and whether or not employees worked at other locations. She requested an updated roster for the TTTF.

Councilmember Pelaez asked if the public education campaign included information on the testing procedure. Dr. Emerick replied that it did not but that was a good point and could be a barrier to testing.

Councilmember Courage asked if 3,000 tests were performed would the test results be available in 24 to 48 hours. Dr. Emerick replied that test results would be staggered because the labs and the processes were different for each.

Councilmember Perry asked when the details of the \$75 million cost would be available. Ms. Villagómez replied that an update would be presented to the City Council on May 20, 2020 and the final health report incorporating the budget in detail would be presented to the City Council on May 25, 2020 and the total plan for the CRF would be presented to the City Council on June 3, 2020.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Mayor Nirenberg adjourned the meeting at 2:51 pm.

APPROVED

RON NIRENBERG
Mayor

Attest:

TINA J. FLORES
Acting City Clerk