

**COMMUNITY HEALTH AND EQUITY  
COUNCIL COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL MEETING  
MARCH 16, 2021 3:00PM  
VIDEOCONFERENCE**

<b>Members Present:</b>	Councilmember Ana Sandoval, Chair, <i>District 7</i> Councilmember Robert Treviño, <i>District 1</i> Councilmember Jada Andrews-Sullivan, <i>District 2</i> Councilmember Rebecca Viagran, <i>District 3</i> Councilmember Shirley Gonzales, <i>District 5</i>
<b>Staff Present:</b>	David McCary, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; John Courage, <i>Councilmember, Council District 9</i> ; Dr. Anita Kurian, <i>Assistant Director, Metro Health Department</i> ; Andrew Estrada, <i>Deputy Chief, San Antonio Fire Department</i> ; Bryan Norris, <i>Assistant Chief, San Antonio Fire Department</i> ; Tina Flores, <i>City Clerk</i> ; Nancy Cano, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>
<b>Others Present:</b>	Justin Rodriguez, <i>Bexar County Commissioner, Precinct 2</i> ; George Hernandez, <i>President &amp; CEO, University Health</i> ; Dr. Bryan Alsip, <i>Executive Vice President &amp; Chief Medical Officer</i> ; Dr. Byron Hepburn, <i>University Health</i> ; Leni Kirkman, <i>Executive Vice President, University Health</i> ; Bill Phillips, <i>Chief Information Officer, University Health</i> ; Dr. Robert Leverance, <i>Chief Medical Officer, UT Health San Antonio</i> ; Major General Jimmie Keenan, <i>Senior Vice President of Enterprise Clinic Operations, WellMed</i>

**Call to order**

Chairwoman Sandoval called the meeting to order.

**Public Comment**

None.

**1. Approval of the meeting minutes from the January 28, 2021 Community Health & Equity Council Committee Meeting.**

Councilmember Viagran moved to approve the minutes for the January 28, 2021 Community Health & Equity Council Committee meeting. Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**2. A briefing providing updates on the community-wide COVID-19 vaccination efforts.** [Anita K. Kurian, MBBS, MPH, DrPH, Assistant Director, MetroHealth]

Dr. Anita Kurian reported that the State's COVID-19 Vaccination Program begin with Phase 1A vaccinations of healthcare workers and long-term care facility residents and staff in early December 2020; later that month, Phase 1B vaccinations of individuals 65+ years and individuals with medical conditions began. She noted that last week, the State added school and childcare workers to the eligible

population and effective yesterday, individuals aged 50+ became eligible to be vaccinated. Dr. Kurian reported that there were 501 fully registered COVID-19 vaccine providers in Bexar County and presented a mapped index of vaccine providers and locations. She noted that not all providers had been allocated weekly vaccines from the U.S. Department of State Health Services (USDSHC) or the Federal government. She stated four large vaccination hubs were established in Bexar County in January 2021 with a goal to provide more vaccines to the general public in a coordinated, community wide effort.

Mr. George Hernandez reported that University Health (UH) selected Wonderland Mall as a large vaccination hub because it was centrally located and local demographic patterns reflected that half of Bexar County residents lived north of Loop 410 and east of IH-10, and the other half lived south of Loop 410 and west of IH-10. He noted that Wonderland Mall had plenty of parking, was ADA accessible, and had a large VIA bus terminal. He added that UH already had a significant computer infrastructure established in its training classroom center at the mall which it converted to a vaccination site. He reported that vaccinations began on January 4, 2021.

Bill Phillips reported on the UH vaccination process at Wonderland Mall. He stated that Ambassadors were posted at mall entrances and around the vaccine clinic to provide guided direction, assist mobility-challenged individuals, and dispatch transporter escorts as needed. He reported that individuals were also vaccinated in their cars, upon on-site request or by call-in. He noted that navigators and registration attendants were assigned to monitor the lines at the registration section and were provided with preprinted daily schedules to verify registrants, validate forms of ID, and issue CDC vaccine cards; once processed, individuals advanced to the vaccination section where navigators ushered them to the next available vaccinator. He reported that individuals were then advanced to a registration discharge point where they were signed up for a second appointment, set up for a text message reminder, and navigated to a 10-minute observation station and were free to leave afterwards. He added that the observation section was equipped with vital sign machines, EPI pens, smelling salts, and snacks for diabetics, if needed. He noted that the mobility-challenged were escorted from point A to the last point and to their cars, if needed.

Dr. Bryan Alsip reported that UH was challenged to scale up vaccination efforts while it maintained the ability to care for patients in all of its facilities. He noted that a significant number of staff was leveraged from UH clinics to support the large vaccine operation that had now expanded to two floors at Wonderland Mall and a specially-designated third site established for mobility-challenged individuals. He stated that UH would continue to operate the Wonderland Mall hub at full speed with a plan to expand at other potential sites, as needed.

Mr. Hernandez referenced the Vaccinate Allocation Guiding Principles provided by the State of Texas which UH implemented for its vaccination process. He explained that a majority of individuals registered through the internet. He reported that UH posted 35,000 vaccine appointments and all were filled up after a few hours. He added that 5,000 vaccine doses were administered in one day. He reported that a total of 193,000 vaccine doses were administered since the start date of December 18, 2020.

Mr. Hernandez reported that UH implemented a more directed approach in December, 2020 for its partnering agencies which included the San Antonio Fire Department (SAFD), local federally qualified health centers, CentroMed, Ascencion DePaul Health Services, the Center for Health Care Services, and

School Districts. He stated that UH targeted all essential workers from these partnering agencies for vaccination and registered them through a direct admit process. He explained that a spreadsheet was circulated to the partners which inserted the names of their 1A and 1B essential workers and returned the lists to UH which integrated those names into its vaccine registry.

Leni Kirkman reported that UH opened phone line registrations at the same time it opened up internet registration to accommodate individuals that did not have access or ability to register via the internet. She stated that UH targeted its vulnerable patients with significant medical issues and called them to schedule their vaccine appointments. She reported that two weeks ago, UH expanded outreach to eligible 1B HEB essential workers and vaccinated a daily average of 50 HEB essential workers in an equitable approach to protect individuals that came into contact with thousands of people on a daily basis.

Ms. Kirkman reported that UH announced vaccination registration dates to the media and invited the public to sign up for email notifications. She noted that 180,000 individuals signed up on the smartphone app and 60,000 signed up for emails. She explained that UH pinpointed and targeted individuals within a 5-10 mile radius of vulnerable populations with low vaccinations rates and called them two weeks in advance to provide a headstart in those areas.

Mr. Hernandez reported that UH mitigated healthcare inequities due to factors such as demographics, poverty, insurance status and geography. He explained that UH operated Carelink, which was a financial assistance program open to San Antonio and Bexar County residents that did not have private or public health insurance. He stated that the UH Carelink Team had been calling every Carelink member that qualified for the vaccine to register them. He noted the increase of domestic violence during COVID-19 and stated that UH vaccinated all eligible staff at the Battered Women's Shelter.

Dr. Alsip reported that State records indicated that 295,064 individuals (19%) in Bexar County had received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and 174,873 had been fully vaccinated (11%). He noted that Bexar County was ahead of Dallas County, Harris County, Tarrant County, and Travis County.

Dr. Robert Leverance reported that over 30 faculty members from UT Health San Antonio (UTHSA) served on various subcommittees of the COVID-19 Community Response and Equity Coalition that helped guide the City through the COVID-19 Pandemic. He stated that UTHSA had administered over 90,000 vaccines and had fully vaccinated over 45,000 individuals. He added that UTHSA shared over 21,000 vaccines with vaccination hub partners and donated vaccine doses to pharmacies, Incarnate Word University, Methodist Hospital, and the Baptist Health System when they were in short supply. He noted that UTHSA was a member of the San Antonio Vaccination Command since its inception and had vaccinated its healthcare workers early on to safeguard vital medical research that included a substantial amount of COVID-19 research.

Dr. Leverance reported that UTHSA had two main vaccination hubs: 1) Hurd Auditorium, UTHSA Health School of Nursing: approximately 200-500 vaccinations daily; and UTHSA Medical Arts & Research Center (MARC): approximately 200 vaccinations daily. He noted that 17% of the UT patient population was considered underserved and included the most impoverished by zip code. He reported that UT had vaccinated many of its 100,000 patients with significant medical issues over the past month.

He stated that UTHSA reached out to partners across the City to vaccinate essential workers with the Bexar County Medical Society, the Bexar County Dental Society, and over 80 childcare providers. He added that UTHSC donated over 4,000 doses to Carvajal Pharmacies that deployed a mobile van unit to schools and long-term care facilities and vaccinated students and patients.

Dr. Leverance reported that UTHSA had scheduled approximately 10,000 vaccines for the eligible general public for Phase 3 to begin next week. He voiced concern for the need to provide phone scheduling access to those who needed it most, and noted that phone lines were easily overwhelmed, and there were long wait times for lines to be answered. He recognized that phone registrations systems were a challenge for all vaccination hubs and their phone operators.

Major General Jimmie Keenan stated that WellMed operated three local vaccination hubs: 1) Elvira Cisneros Senior Community Center: 52,063 vaccines; 2) Alicia Treviño Senior Center: 27,448 vaccines; and 3) Ingram Mall site: 16,252 vaccines. She noted that WellMed had over 800,000 senior patients and many did not have access or ability to register via the internet. She reported that WellMed contracted Carenet, a call center, to provide phone registration services and that Carenet received over 2.4 million calls in March 2020, and 48,000 incoming calls yesterday. She added that callers could schedule up to 4 or 5 family members at one time.

Maj. Gen. Keenan reported that over 57% of WellMed vaccine recipients identified as Hispanic, 41.5% identified as non-Hispanic or Latino, and 1.45% refused to identify their ethnicity. She noted that vaccination hubs could not restrict patients by zip code and noted that a majority were from the Southside and Westside of the City, and individuals from Dallas and Houston had also registered.

Dr. Kurian reported that Metro Health categorized its vaccination efforts into three categories: 1) COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Site – Alamodome; 2) Mobile and Pop-up Clinics; and 3) Homebound Seniors Program. She stated that the Alamodome site was primarily a drive-thru operation with a small walk-up component to accommodate individuals with transportation challenges. She added that 70-80 staff members worked in two shifts, with 7-9 Spanish Speakers per shift. She recognized the 7,283 Alamodome volunteers for their support. She reported that Metro Health released 10,000 appointments on March 8, 2021 and had appointments scheduled through April 3, 2021. She reported that 1,000 weekly appointments were allocated as follows: Community health care workers: 600 slots; 3-1-1: 400 slots; and Online registration: 5,000 slots.

Dr. Kurian reported that over 86,761 vaccines were administered at the Alamodome to date, an average of 2,600 vaccines were administered daily, and the highest amount of doses administered on single day was 33,500. She presented an area map of 5,400 Bexar County residents that had received their first dose, and an area map of 32,755 Bexar County residents that were fully vaccinated. She added that the general public could register to receive text message alerts for updates on COVID-19 vaccine availability. She reported that over 56% of vaccine recipients identified as Hispanic, 32.5% identified as non-Hispanic White, and 5.5% identified as African American. She noted that 30.8% of the group fully vaccinated were over 65 years old, which indicated that the targeted critical population was receiving the vaccine.

Dr. Kurian reported that there were three Pop-Up COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics: 1) Good Samaritan Community Center: 268 vaccinations to date; 2) Bethel A.M.E. Church: 255 vaccinations to date; and 3)

James A. Bode Community Center: 240 vaccinations to date. She stated that staff referenced the COVID-19 Index in selecting these locations. She added that enrollment mobile clinic enrollment efforts would be targeted towards residents that lived nearby and to local senior centers, Churches, and other delegate agencies. She noted that Metro Health reached out to all Council District Offices to organize the hosting of mobile vaccine clinics.

Deputy Fire Chief Andrew Estrada reported that the Senior Vaccination Program began on February 1, 2021. He stated that SAFD partnered with Meals on Wheels, San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) to identify targeted populations. He added that 10 mobile teams were deployed daily on targeted routes with a goal of vaccinating 1,000 residents per week. He added that over 3,249 seniors were vaccinated to date, and second doses were currently being administered. He reported that staff also performed home safety checks and issued handoff referral sources to other City services and departments as needed. He noted that the vaccine was only good for a few hours and for instances when door knocks went unanswered, doses refused, and or seniors changed their mind or had already received the vaccine, SAFD would administer the shot to another qualified member in the household, eligible neighbors, or to another senior on the list that lived nearby.

Dr. Kurian reported that the State would allocate 623,610 vaccines for Week 14 and Bexar County would receive 41,250 doses (only 6.6%). She noted that approximately 1.6 million residents were eligible for the vaccine in Bexar County, and 13% of all Bexar County residents were fully vaccinated.

Chairwoman Sandoval thanked the representatives, mass vaccine providers, staff, and volunteers for their leading efforts across Bexar County. She noted the considerable efforts each had made to address the issues of geographic access, language access, and the digital divide. She stated that she received many reports of the positive experiences shared by residents. She observed that there were currently more Bexar County residents that had not been vaccinated than those who had. She presented the following questions to the representatives of UH, UTHSA, WellMed, and Metro Health:

1. How do mass vaccine providers coordinate with each other?
2. Is there a way that elected City Leaders could have a better sense of their strategies and next steps?
3. Is there any way to make the vaccination process easier for the general public?

Chairwoman Sandoval asked that the representatives return very soon to the Committee for a continued discussion of the questions. She encouraged the representatives to collaborate with Dr. Kurian and Metro Health on answers to the questions in the interim.

Commissioner Justin Rodriguez stated that the mass vaccine providers were doing an excellent job and noted that there was no roadmap to respond to a pandemic crisis. He noted that mobile vaccine deployments needed to be expanded for the spring and summer outreach to supplement the major hub efforts and reach vulnerable populations effectively. He requested the development of a consolidated vaccination map of the total amount of doses administered by all providers in Bexar County. He requested allocations for smaller or vulnerable areas through a collaborative portal process. He asked which mass vaccine providers received allocations directly from the State.

Councilmember Courage described the UH vaccination process as perfect. He called for the UH registry system to be expanded as the primary portal for the City and the County, where UH would designate and distribute groups of registrants to next vaccine hub that had available doses. He explained that the City and/or County could lend resources and assist with operations; in the alternative, the City and/or County could replicate the UT registration system and utilize the Information and Technology Systems Department (ITSD) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) to do so, which would remove some of the system load from Metro Health.

Councilmember Treviño stated that a Waiting List was needed as residents were spending thousands of hours unsuccessfully trying to register for an appointment. He added that many organizations utilized waiting systems, from restaurants to organ transplant entities, and recommended a partnership with CivTech SA to develop a waiting list system. He noted that Spanish-speaking Seniors were one of the most difficult populations to reach and called for creative ways to inform them of the vaccine program and mentioned pushing to Carlos Valenzuela on this topic. He asked how the unsheltered homeless population would be vaccinated and how many had received the vaccine. He asked that homeless encampments be left intact per guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) so that unhoused individuals could be vaccinated more efficiently, and which would reduce the spread of the disease when more encampments arose. He requested that a vulnerability index be created to calculate the proximity and volume of COVID-19 cases.

Dr. Kurian stated that the Bexar County used an index that extended more further out than the CDC's Social Vulnerability Index (SCI) and took into account equity, household composition, household income, and racial ethnic breakdown. She noted that Metro Health did not track languages and it would be difficult to provide that information. She added that Metro Health planned to partner with the Department of Human Services to collaborate on vaccine efforts to reach the homeless population as vaccine allocations were increased. She noted that all homeless individuals that were eligible under the 1B population could be vaccinated.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked how many doses were distributed to the Hilliard Clinic. She asked how many Churches had pre-registration lists and how many individuals had they preregistered. She asked of other Eastside locations that were to be considered as vaccine sites. Mr. Hernandez confirmed that Hilliard Clinic was allocated vaccine doses as were other clinics. He reported that approximately 160 doses were administered daily to Eastside residents at Wonderland Mall through a list of eligible residents provided by Dr. Burns and Jeylynne Burley, President & CEO, The Center for Health Care Services. He added that UH partnered with Methodist Healthcare Ministries and prepared and transferred doses to the Dixon Clinics. Dr. Allsip confirmed that 1,000 doses had been administered to 1,000 individuals from a Master List of 5,000 pre-registered individuals and to vans of Church constituents. Mr. Hernandez stated that the library at St. Phillips College would be considered as a vaccine hub and had ample space to accommodate 1,500 dosages daily. He noted that the Hilliard Clinic was only scalable to approximately 250 per day.

Councilmember Viagran asked how many 1B eligible individuals had been vaccinated by UTHSCA by zip code. She asked if Carvajal Pharmacies administered doses at their locations and by mobile vans. She asked who made the decision on the allocation of doses, the amount distributed, and to which entities distributed. She asked for further clarity on the difference between the number of doses UH received and the doses it got. Dr. Leverance confirmed that UTHSCA conducted outreach over

100,000 of its patients through its electronic health record system, with a reported 10% - 20% response rate. He reported that Carvajal Pharmacies administered doses at their pharmacies and through outreach to long term care facilities, due to mobility issues of those patients. Mr. Hernandez stated that UH reliably received approximately 12,000 first doses per week, of which 500 daily doses were reserved for the Robert B. Green Clinic (RBG) and all other dosages were administered at Wonderland Mall. He explained that UH scheduled specialty groups such as SAFD, EMS, some teachers, bus drivers and Carelink patients to receive their dosages at the RBG Clinic during allotted times due to its limited space capacity. He reported that last week, Wonderland Mall administered 12,000 initial doses and 12,000 second doses at both of its sites and would administer 7,000 doses over three days this week. He noted that special groups such as teachers were scheduled for doses outside of the normal hours for the public which was 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Councilmember Gonzales asked if CentroMed received doses from UH. She requested further information regarding a universal registry for Bexar County and asked if there was a better way for individuals not connected to a Church or organization to be notified of available slots. She asked if the general public could directly contact the agencies listed by the State for Week 14 allocations. Mr. Hernandez reported that UH initially vaccinated all of CentroMed's healthworkers; thereafter, CentroMedi received vaccines to administer to the general public. Dr. Leverance stated the main problem was that the current vaccine supply did not meet the demand, and he was not sure that having a single registry would solve the main problem. He reported that the large vaccine hubs met weekly and had subgroups that also met in a coordinated fashion. He noted that none of the groups were opposed to a single registry, but that he was unsure a single registry system would be easier or quicker for the general public. Dr. Kurian confirmed that the general public could reach out directly to the locations posted weekly by the Texas Department of Human Services (DHS) on its website.

Councilmember Viagran stated that the overarching theme was to strategize next steps for all the entities involved for efficiency and to make it the registration process easier and better for residents. She noted that continued collaboration and sharing of information among all entities involved was extremely important. She asked of the next steps for CentroMed and its targeted outreach and called for staff to connect with CentroMed. She requested that UH collaborate and share available slots with other vaccine hubs for upcoming designated doses for specialty groups. She called for the development of a repository of eligible residents by zip code that could be notified when dosages were available in their community.

Chairwoman Sandoval requested that the representatives consider providing the Committee with a brief report on their weekly collaborative meetings. She expressed concern for the challenges the general public experienced with vaccine registration and called for the representatives to propose solutions that would make the registration process easier and less confusing.

Mr. Hernandez stated that UH was honored to be part of the vaccination process and concurred that the supply was the problem. He added that the teams were ready to expand the process as supply increased. He noted that UH implemented guidance and ideas it received on the process and would continue to find solutions.

Dr. Leverance reported that UHSCA used an established, decentralized system to coordinate efforts. He stated that UHSCA attended a brief weekly meeting with the Mayor's Office and could attend a brief,

regularly scheduled meeting with the Committee. He voiced concern about digital divide issues that prevented vulnerable populations from registering. He added that UTHSCA could collaborate with other partners to schedule appointments for community-created lists of eligible individuals that did not have internet, computer access or abilities, or smartphones and provided his contact information.

Maj. Gen. Keenan referenced the State's data on vaccine allocations and noted that local government officials needed to have crucial conversations with State officials to request proportionate vaccine allocations for Bexar County. She added that Bexar County employed many individuals that lived outside its limits and provided resources to many residents of underserved, surrounding counties. She spoke of volunteer fatigue, the continued need for a proportionate number of volunteers and personnel to staff the vaccine hubs, and the opportunity to leverage with the trained medical military personnel at Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA). She noted that 1.6 million local residents were eligible for the vaccine and if a registry list was utilized in numerical order, it could be more anxiety-inducing for those listed towards the bottom. She reported that the current no-show average rate at the Cisneros and Treviño Senior Centers was 3%, and observed that if a centralized system was developed, it could prevent duplicate registrations that led to no-shows.

Deputy Chief Estrada recommended that STRAC be included in future meetings.

Chairwoman Sandoval urged the representatives to provide the Committee with any assignments that would make the vaccination process work better for residents. She stated staff would coordinate a future meeting with the representatives.

## **Adjourn**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:23 pm.

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*Ana Sandoval, Chair*

*Respectfully Submitted,*

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*Nancy Cano, Office of the City Clerk*