



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number: 18-3662

Agenda Item Number: 19.

Agenda Date: 8/16/2018

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Health

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Colleen M. Bridger, MPH, PhD

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Appointment of Dr. Junda Woo as Local Health Authority

SUMMARY:

This Ordinance authorizes the execution of a Certificate of Appointment of Local Health Authority and submission to the Texas Department of State Health Services naming Dr. Chichi Junda Woo (Dr. Woo), Medical Director for the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District, as Local Health Authority for San Antonio and surrounding areas of Bexar County.

The term of this appointment will be for two years effective October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2020 upon which a re-appointment can be sought.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Established by the 79th Legislative session, through the Local Public Health Re-Organization Act, Health and Safety Code (HSC), Chapter 121, local health authorities (LHA) serve as a critical part of the state's public health system. In the state of Texas, the director of a public health district is the chief administrative officer. If the director is a physician, the director is the LHA in the district's jurisdiction. If the director of a public health district is not a physician, then the director shall appoint a physician as the LHA, subject to approval by the district's governing entity and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). If a jurisdiction does not appoint a LHA, then the director of the DSHS regional office performs the duties of the LHA.

LHAs must be appointed in municipalities or counties with established local health departments or public health districts. The LHA must be a competent physician in reputable, professional standing who is licensed in and residing in Texas.

The LHA performs duties as necessary to implement and enforce laws to protect the public health and any duties prescribed by DSHS. A LHA serves for a term of two years (with no term limits), may be removed for cause, and is a state officer when performing duties prescribed by state law. The duties of a LHA include:

- Establishing, maintaining, and enforcing quarantine in the LHA's jurisdiction;
- Aiding DSHS in relation to local quarantine, inspection, disease prevention and suppression, birth and death statistics, and general sanitation within the LHA's jurisdiction;
- Reporting the presence of contagious, infectious, and dangerous epidemic diseases in the jurisdiction to DSHS;
- Reporting to DSHS on any subject on which it is proper for a report to DSHS to be made; and
- Aiding DSHS in enforcing proper rules requirements, ordinances, sanitation laws, quarantine rules, and vital statistics collection.

In order to meet the needs of the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (Metro Health) and achieve public health preparedness goals as outlined in the Texas DSHS Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Cities Readiness Initiative Grants, Metro Health seeks the appointment of Dr. Woo as the LHA for the City of San Antonio and surrounding areas of Bexar County to perform the duties as outlined above and implement control measures in the event of a public health emergency.

Chapter 121 of the Texas Health and Safety Code empowers a LHA to implement control measures, which may include quarantines, isolation orders, coordination of disaster response, and controlling the spread of communicable disease outbreaks or naturally occurring epidemics affecting the public's health.

ISSUE:

Metro Health requests Council authorization to execute a Certificate of Appointment of Local Health Authority and submission to the Texas Department of State Health Services naming Dr. Chichi Junda Woo (Dr. Woo), Medical Director for the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District, as Local Health Authority (LHA) for the City of San Antonio and surrounding areas of Bexar County. For the size of the local jurisdiction served by Metro Health, it is unconventional for the public health district to not have an appointed LHA.

Additionally, the appointment of Dr. Woo will provide a means for the LHA to implement control measures in the event of a public health emergency within the City of San Antonio and surrounding area of Bexar County without reliance on the director of the Department of State Health Services Region 8 office who must serve as the LHA for all counties, in the Region's 28-county service area, who do not have an appointed LHA.

ALTERNATIVES:

If the appointment of Local Health Authority (LHA) is not made, the City of San Antonio could rely on the Regional Director of the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to act as the LHA for Bexar County; however, as Director of a regional office, the individual serves as the LHA for the other counties in the Region if the county does not have an appointed LHA. The DSHS Region 8 service area includes a total of 28 counties. At times, such as during an emergency or disaster, the Region 8 Director's availability to respond as

the LHA may be spread thin, making it challenging to meet the requirements of the LHA for all areas.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact to the general fund in appointing a Local Health Authority for the City of San Antonio and surrounding areas of Bexar County.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Ordinance authorizing the execution of a Certificate of Appointment of Local Health Authority and submission to the Texas Department of State Health Services naming Dr. Chichi Junda Woo (Dr. Woo), Medical Director for the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District, as Local Health Authority for the City of San Antonio and surrounding areas of Bexar County.