City of San Antonio

Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	19-7764
Type:	Staff Briefing - Without Ordinance
In control:	City Council B Session
On agenda:	10/30/2019
Title:	Briefing by the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District on the mandatory posting of letter grade placards in food establishments. [Colleen M. Bridger, MPH, PhD, Assistant City Manager; Jennifer Herriott, Interim Director, Health]
Sponsors:	
Indexes:	
Code sections:	
Attachments:	1. Staff Presentation

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result

DEPARTMENT: Health

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Jennifer Herriott, MPH

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

A briefing by the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District on a proposal to make the posting of letter grade placards mandatory in food establishments.

SUMMARY:

The San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (Metro Health) will provide a presentation discussing the input collected from the public and food establishments on the mandatory posting of letter grade placards.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In November 2014, the City's Office of Innovation conducted a study on Metro Health's Food & Environmental section. One of the recommended outcomes included an update on the scoring system to make it more transparent for the public. In 2016, Metro Health implemented a voluntary letter grade placard system with Health Inspectors providing food establishments with a letter grade placard in addition to the inspection report. Both include a numbered score. Currently, only the posting of the inspection report is mandatory

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within the food establishment premises as per City Ordinance.

A letter grade placard is more intuitive and transparent to the public, reduces foodborne illness, saves on associated health care costs, and helps food establishments with long-term compliance.

Other U.S. cities that currently use letter grade placards include Boston, New York City, Los Angeles, San Diego, Charlotte, and Chicago. Texas cities that use letter grade placards include Plano, Kerrville, Live Oak, Schertz, Selma, Shavano, and Cibolo. Letter grade placards are also supported by the Big Cities Health Coalition representing the 30 largest U.S. Cities and the National Association of County & City Health Officials.

On December 14, 2018, Dr. Colleen Bridger, the Health Director at that time provided the City's Community Health and Equity Committee with a presentation on the status of Metro Health's voluntary letter grade placard system. The committee approved a motion to forward the mandatory display of letter grade placards to the full City Council for a vote.

In 2019, Metro Health began to gather input from both the public and from food establishments on a proposal to make the display of letter grade placards mandatory.

Outreach to the public and food establishments included an English and Spanish SA Speak Up survey shared via Metro Health and SA Speak Up websites, social media, and through City Council offices. Metro Health also hosted a public meeting and shared the public survey at SA Speak Up community budget events. Targeted outreach to food establishments included Health Inspectors providing a survey on letter grade options with food establishment operators. In addition, Metro Health met with board representatives from the San Antonio Restaurant Association and the San Antonio Area Tourism Council to provide information on the proposal and to seek their input.

ISSUE:

Metro Health would like the opportunity to provide a presentation on the input collected from the public and food establishments on a proposal to make the posting of letter grade placards mandatory. Staff will provide letter grade options for City Council consideration.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

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