



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:21-3908

Agenda Item Number: 4.

Agenda Date: 5/27/2021

In Control: Community Health and Equity Committee

DEPARTMENT: Health

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Anita K Kurian, MBBS, MPH, DrPH, Assistant Director -Communicable Disease Division

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT: A briefing on the COVID-19 Research Grants Project administered and managed by the partnership of The Health Collaborative and Metro Health.

SUMMARY:

The Health Collaborative will provide a presentation on their collaboration with Metro Health to administer and manage the COVID-19 Research Grants. In May 2020, the City of San Antonio received \$270 million from the \$150 billion national Coronavirus Relief Fund, also known as CARES funds. San Antonio Metropolitan Health Department allocated \$500,000 in support of local community research projects and asked the Health Collaborative to administer the funds. The Health Collaborative awarded 5 community-based research projects and research findings were released January 2021.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Historically, pandemics have disproportionately affected the underserved, including those with low-income and ethnic minorities. Anticipating that COVID-19 will have a compounding effect on community members who experience adverse social determinants of health, The City of San Antonio, Metro Health Department, The Health Collaborative and researchers, through this project and its findings shed light on the experiences and needs of some of these communities which may be disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 including children with special needs, undocumented individuals and neighbors affected by poverty.

As champions of health equity, the City's Community Health & Equity Committee pushed for a portion of these funds to be allocated to advance COVID-19 research on a community level with the goal to better understand the pandemic's impact on locally-occurring health disparities and provide evidence-based paths to improved health equity for San Antonio's most vulnerable residents. The Health Collaborative partnered with San Antonio Metropolitan Health District and administered the funds and managed the research projects which took place from September 1, 2020 to December 11, 2020. Five research projects were awarded in the areas of: COVID-19 Community-Partnered Participatory Research (CPPR), Evaluation of existing COVID-19 interventions, and Population epidemiology research.

The five awardees were:

- Children's Rehabilitation Institute TeletonUSA
Alza La Voz: Amplifying the Voices of Families of Children with Special Needs
- Community Information Now (CI:NOW)
COVID-19 & Health Disparities
- Martinez Street Women's Center
Undocufund Emergency Assistance
- University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio - ReACH Center
Quality of life & Perceived Needs of Survivors of COVID-19 Infection
- University of Texas at San Antonio Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering
Wastewater Informed Epidemiological Monitoring of COVID-19 in Bexar County

These research projects began in September 2020 at the start of the fall season - San Antonio's anticipated second surge of COVID cases. Any surveys conducted captured the voice of a community six to ten months into the COVID-19 pandemic. At this time, the community was already being shaped by impacts from social, political and economic changes that occurred in response to the pandemic.

While their research projects varied, the characteristic unifying these awardees was their track-records of powerful work in community health and safety, which focuses on improving the quality of life for historically underserved populations in San Antonio. The collective goal was to provide valuable insight through research findings to empower San Antonio to move forward in strategically addressing these disparities.

The Health Collaborative will publish any updated findings from ongoing projects on the website as they are reported, www.growhealthyfund.com.

ISSUE:

With the support of Metro Health, the Health Collaborative would like the opportunity to brief the Community Health and Equity Committee on efforts to gain a deeper understanding of the disproportionate impacts that COVID-19 has on marginalized communities and its collaboration with Metro Health in this project.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact at this time.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.