



Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
P.O. Box 1088
Austin, Texas 78767
(512) 972-5010 Fax (512) 972-5016

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Shannon Jones, Director, Health and Human Services Department

Date: July 27, 2015

Subject: CIUR #1604 – Equity Assessment Tool

On May 7, 2015, City Council approved Resolution focusing on health and economic equity. As a result of this Resolution the Health and Human Services Department (HHSD) was assigned Council Item Update Report (CIUR) #1604. HHSD was assigned lead role related to the first part of the resolution focusing on health equity. The second element of the resolution focusing on economic equity and equity assessment is in process of being assigned to another City of Austin, (COA) department. Below is a summary of actions taken by HHSD related to health equity, and a brief update on next steps related to economic equity.

Health Equity: The Resolution directed the City Manager to establish a working group to gather information for improving health outcomes for infants, mothers, and other members of the community and to provide a progress report including initial recommendations and potential items for budget consideration to the Health and Human Services Committee by no later than August 3, 2015 with a final report by December 7, 2015.

HHSD's Actions to Date:

- Established Working Group: The Director of the HHSD established a working group to focus on improving health outcomes for infants, mothers, and others. The working group includes HHSD executive leadership and the following external partners as identified in the Resolution: 1) Mama Sana, 2) ALLGO, 3) Alliance African American Health of Central Texas, and 4) Austin Immigrant Rights Coalition. HHSD has been working in close partnership with the key external partners
- Development of Short Term Goals: The working group has been meeting on a regular basis to develop short term goals, conceptualize proposals focusing on maternal infant health, chronic disease, and HIV/AIDS, and to develop report and presentation for Health and Human Services Committee meeting scheduled for August 3, 2015.
- Facilitation of Community Forums: The working group will facilitate two community health forums. The forums will take place Thursday July 9th from 6:00pm to 8:00pm and Saturday, July 18. The purpose of the community forums will be to gather input on health issues affecting the community. During the forums, the key areas addressed in the short term goals will be discussed with community for their direct input. Input from these forums will be incorporated in the August 3 report/presentation.

- Development of Report and Presentation: An update on the CIUR 1604 is due to Assistant City Manager (ACM) Lumbreras by July 31. The working group will submit a draft report to ACM Lumbreras by July 27 for his review. The report will be the basis for the presentation to the Health and Human Service Committee on August 3, 2015. Concurrently with update to ACM Lumbreras, the external partners will update Mayor's office and Council Offices on progress made to address the health equity component of the resolution.

Economic Equity: The Resolution directed the City Manager to evaluate the impact that existing City policies and practices have on equity, evaluate best practices and develop recommendations for addressing current race and socioeconomic-based inequities. The recommendation should include the development of an equity assessment tool to be used by every City department during budget process.

Actions to Date:

- Contact with other Departments: HHSD has initiated contact with other COA departments to include Human Resources Department, Budget, and Economic Development.
- Next Steps: A lead COA department needs to be identified to work on this element of the Resolution. An initial meeting was facilitated with key COA departments to develop next steps.

As we discuss the Equity Resolution and CIUR 1604 we would like to take this opportunity to share with Mayor and Council some of the current equity initiatives in HHSD. A Section 1115 Medicaid Waiver was approved for Texas by the federal government in 2011, allowing access to federal funds designated to improve access to care, the quality of care, and the health of the population being served. HHSD was approved for three projects stressing minority health including a prenatal/postnatal program that uses community health workers to improve birth and twelve-month postnatal outcomes with an emphasis on African American women. Another project provides support services, based on the evidence-based Healthy Families America model, to target African-Americans who are expectant or new parents. We also have an 1115 Waiver program to increase community health workers and/or community-based organizations in the Hispanic and African-American communities to provide culturally appropriate diabetes self-management education.

Additionally, we have social services contracts and our long running HHSD African American Quality of Life program focused on preventing disease and promoting health by providing education and health screenings in underserved areas in the community. The program utilizes a van team composed of neighborhood liaisons, nurses, and community workers who provide mobile services, to increase health screenings in minority neighborhoods. All van services are free of charge. The program can be contacted at 512 972-5186.

As we still need to develop the assessment tool, present to the Health and Human Services Committee at the August meeting and determine final recommendations we wish to request an extension of CIUR 1604 until August 15th, 2015 to complete this process.

Please let us know if you have any questions, 972-5010, thanks.

CC: Marc A. Ott, City Manager
Bert Lumbreras, Assistant City Manger

Elaine Hart, Chief Financial Officer
Ed Van Eenoo, Deputy Chief Financial Officer