



Travis County Commissioners Court Voting Session Agenda Request

Meeting Date: June 28th, 2022

Agenda Language: Provide monthly update to the Commissioner's Court on the directives included in the Declaration of a Public Health Crisis & Overdose Prevention Measures.

Prepared By/Phone Number: Laura Peveto/ 512-854-7874 & Courtney Lucas/737-356-8604

Elected/Appointed Official or Department Head: Pilar Sanchez, County Executive Health and Human Services and AgriLife Extension

Commissioners Court Sponsor(s): County Judge Andy Brown and Commissioner Margaret Gomez

Press Inquiries: Hector Nieto, PIO@traviscountytexas.gov or (512) 854-8740

Background/Summary of Request and Attachments:

On May 24th, 2022, the Commissioner's Court declared a Public Health Crisis in Travis County related to drug overdoses. The declaration took effect immediately and shall expire October 1, 2024, unless extended by Commissioners Court order. The declaration contains 8 directives to address the Public Health Crisis. Directive 4c states that "HHS staff and relevant county staff to meet monthly with harm reductionists and directly impacted people including individuals: in active drug use, who have experienced an overdose, recently released from Travis County Jail, or/and experiencing homelessness to identify trends and emerging needs to respond to the overdose crisis and report back to the Commissioners Court monthly for six months." HHS will update the court on the last voting session each month. The agenda item will provide a brief status update on each of the Court's directives.

Staff Recommendations:

Receive the update on the status of implementation of the Court's directives from the Public Health Crisis Declaration.

Issues and Opportunities:

The goal for the implementation of the Court's directives is to reduce overdose deaths in the community through increased services, awareness, and distribution of Naloxone.

AGENDA REQUEST & BACKUP MATERIALS DEADLINE: Agenda requests and backup materials must be submitted in PDF format via email to agenda@traviscountytexas.gov by **12 noon on Tuesday** in order to be considered for inclusion in the following week's voting session.

Fiscal Impact and Source of Funding:

The Court in the Public Health Declaration earmarked \$350,000 from the general fund allocated reserve to increase the availability of Naloxone in the community and overdose prevention kits; and funds to support community-based service providers staff to provide harm reduction services to people at risk of overdosing.

The Court in the Public Health Declaration directed in 4e to identify resources necessary for the successful implementation of the requirements of this resolution. PBO allocated of general fund reserves to hire a Special Project Worker, managed by HHS with a salary range from \$59,466 to \$77,306. It is anticipated that the position will be hired at the higher end of the salary range based on the expertise required to fulfill the duties of the position.

Required Authorizations:

Judge Andy Brown, County Judge
Comm. Margaret Gomez, County Commissioner Precinct 4
Jessica Rio, County Executive, PBO
Patti Smith, CPA, Travis County Auditor
Michelle Surka, Planning and Budget Analyst
Pilar Sanchez, County Executive, HHS
Laura Peveto, Division Director, Office of Children Services, HHS
Courtney Lucas, Senior Planner, Research & Planning, HHS

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Declaration of a Public Health Crisis & Overdose Prevention Measures
Travis County Health and Human Services Update to Travis County Commissioners Court
June 28, 2022

Directive 4a

Planning and Budget Office to earmark \$350,000 from the General Fund Allocated Reserve to allow for Purchasing, and County Attorney staff to work with HHS to allocate and use these earmarked funds that are necessary to preserve and protect the public health as described above within the next six months including funds to increase the availability of Naloxone in the community and overdose prevention kits; and funds to support community-based service providers staff to provide harm reduction services to people at risk of overdosing. It is the Commissioners Court's intention to offset any of these costs and expenditures with any settlement or judgment proceeds received from Travis County's ongoing opioid litigation.

- *Primary Staff:* Laura Peveto, Courtney Lucas
- *Update on Naloxone purchase*
 - Travis County has an existing vendor to purchase Naloxone, Cardinal Pharmaceuticals.
 - HHS have conferred with County Legal, Emergency Services, STAR Flight, and Purchasing.
 - Current recommendation is to pursue a standing order for the administration and distribution of Naloxone through our Health Authority and Dr. Walkes.
- *Update on funding allocation*
 - HHS met with community members on June 10 to gather their direction on how to allocate funds and who in the community was positioned to fulfil this directive.
 - Consensus decision was made for HHS to contract with Communities for Recovery for the entire \$350,000.
 - HHS met with Communities for Recovery for initial discussion of scope of services and budget.

Directive 4b

Travis County Health and Human Services (HHS) and Public Information Office (PIO) staff to develop a plan to work with community organizations to raise awareness and provide education related to the risk of overdose death, the harms and risk associated with fentanyl, and the resources available to community members for drug treatment.

- *Primary Staff:* Hector Nieto and Yoojin Cho
- *Updates*
 - HHS and PIO met on June 9 and identified roles and responsibilities.
 - PIO will work to develop marketing campaign, in collaboration with Central Health and APH, per the City's resolution. HHS will provide technical assistance on content.

Directive 4c

HHS staff and relevant county staff to meet monthly with harm reductionists and directly impacted people including individuals: in active drug use, who have experienced an overdose, recently released from Travis County Jail, or/and experiencing homelessness to identify trends and emerging needs to respond to the overdose crisis and report back to the Commissioners Court monthly for six months.

- *Primary Staff:* Laura Peveto, Courtney Lucas

- *Updates*
 - First community discussion held on June 6. 56 people attended.
 - Discussion included joint design of the community discussion participation and topics and raising awareness and providing education.
 - A meeting to gather community input to ensure that the remaining five discussions meet the community expectations regarding participation, focus and amplifying the voices of those most impacted will be held on June 23.
 - Based on this input, the next community discussion will be scheduled for July, and then held monthly thereafter, through November 2022.

Directive 4d

For the purpose of facilitating the prescribing of opioid antagonists to combat the effects of opioid overdose and in compliance with the statutes and regulations of the State of Texas (the “Law”), including the rules and regulations of the Texas Board of Pharmacy, including Texas statutes governing the practice of pharmacy and any rules and regulations promulgated under Texas law regulating the practice of pharmacy; HHS staff to work with the Public Health Authority and explore signing a Travis County naloxone access standing order to authorize County funds for Narcan/naloxone purchase and distribution.

- *Primary Staff:* Ana Almaguel
- *Updates*
 - In process of scheduling a meeting to discuss this specific directive

Directive 4e

HHS Staff provide the Commissioners Court with recommendations

- i. To increase the availability of Naloxone in the Community;*
 - ii. To explore federal and state grants for measures such as mobile drug treatment services; and*
 - iii. That identify resources necessary for the successful implementation of the requirements of this resolution.*
- *Primary Staff:* Laura Peveto, Courtney Lucas
 - *Updates*
 - The Special Project Worker position is currently posted.
 - Currently exploring the potential use of interns to supplement the work.

Directive 4f

HHS, PBO, County Attorney staff, to provide the Commissioners Court with a report by October 15, 2022, that identifies and describes:

- i. County programs that assist in providing mental health, behavioral health, and substance use treatment; and*
 - ii. County funding that addresses substance use and behavioral health challenges; and*
 - iii. This should include the amount of funding and related outcomes supported for each program.*
- *Primary Staff:* HHS Special Project Worker
 - *Updates*
 - HHS County Executive facilitated initial discussion with other County Executives regarding this directive and how to obtain the required information.

Directive 4g

HHS and purchasing staff to identify opportunities within current county contracts and interlocal agreements for the collection and disposal of hazardous material, including syringes and other drug paraphernalia, from community-based service providers at county locations.

- *Primary Staff:* Juanita Jackson
- *Updates*
 - Currently researching contracts.

Directive 4h

Intergovernmental Affairs staff to articulate Travis County Commissioners Court position:

- i. In support of the legalization and access to fentanyl test strips, and expansion of Good Samaritan laws, in the county's legislative efforts; and*
 - ii. Against bills that increase arrest and severity of criminal punishment, and impact likelihood of bystanders calling 911 related to overdoses.*
- *Primary Staff:* Julie Wheeler
 - *Updates*
 - Is informed of the directive and will collaborate with HHS as needed.