



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 21, 2021

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

**DOCKET TITLE:**  
Introduction of the 2021 Community Health Improvement Plan.

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**ISSUE:** Introduction and endorsement of the 2021 Community Health Improvement Plan

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council endorse the Community Health Improvement Plan.

**BACKGROUND:** The Alexandria Health Department's 2019 Community Health Assessment (CHA) found that while Alexandria, as a whole, is healthy relative to the rest of Virginia, there are significant disparities along the lines of race, ethnicity, sexuality, age, income, and ZIP code.

These disparities include differences in chronic condition rates and outcomes, incidence of mental health issues, teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and more.

Following the release of the CHA, the Alexandria Health Department and the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria (a local coalition of health leaders and residents) facilitated the development of a five-year Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

In 2019, the timing of revisions to three major citywide plans coincided-the Alexandria City Public Schools' Strategic Plan, the Department of Community and Human Services' Children and Youth Master Plan, and the Alexandria Health Department and the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria's CHIP. These organizations established a Unified Planning Team in the spring of 2019 to develop their plans collectively. This coordination provided added value to each by maximizing community engagement opportunities, sharing important data, and focusing on shared outcomes.

The CHIP development process was grounded in a community decision-making and shared power model that borrowed strategies from racial and environmental justice advocacy groups. First, community members

selected the top three focus areas for the CHIP-poverty, housing, and mental health-from the CHA's list of 10 major local health concerns. Then, the group identified the root causes of those challenges, including racist, sexist, ageist, and ableist policies and systems that perpetuate disparities.

Over the next month, community members brainstormed more than 700 solutions to these root causes and then scored them based on impact, community acceptability, and equity. These solutions were then refined with metrics of success, tactic owners, and timelines. Various City agencies and partners, such as ACPS, ARHA, Office of Housing, Planning and Zoning, and DCHS, were part of these planning efforts to find alignment with their agency work plans and provide subject matter expertise. While COVID-19 interrupted the CHIP development process, the Alexandria Health Department (AHD) and the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria restarted planning efforts in late 2020 with a new lens considering COVID-19's impacts. The CHIP was ultimately released in summer 2021 as an actionable roadmap to improving health through policies and programs around core priorities of mental health, poverty, and housing.

**DISCUSSION:** The CHIP is consistent with the City's racial equity resolution and the increasing focus on diverse and inclusive community engagement. The CHIP development process could serve as a model for both future planning efforts and for how staff can deepen relationships with community partners and residents. The CHIP also acknowledges the wide range of strategies and tactics that sprang from residents' lived experiences. Between topics such as criminal justice, digital equity, tenant rights, and culturally appropriate mental health services, the CHIP takes a holistic look at health that requires policy change and changes to programs or services. As a number of Alexandria Boards and Commissions have volunteered to serve as various tactic owners, the CHIP's policy changes will need to occur either with City Council legislation or through advocacy at the state level.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** There are no immediate costs. There may be costs associated with some of the plan tactics, however, tactic owners will be responsible for identifying and securing funding sources.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Proposed Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)
2. PowerPoint Presentation

**STAFF:**

Natalie Talis, Population Health Manager for the Alexandria Health Department