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MINUTES

HEALTH COMMISSION

COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

Tuesday, September 21, 2010, 2:00 p.m.

101 Grove, Room 302, San Francisco, CA 94102

1) CALL TO ORDER

Present: Commissioner Margine Sako, Chair
Commissioner James M. Illig, Member
Commissioner Catherine Waters R.N., Ph.D., Member

The meeting was called to order at 2:01pm.

2) APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 17, 2010 COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE MINUTES

Action Taken: The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the August 17, 2010 meeting.

3) HEALTHY MEAL INCENTIVE LEGISLATION

Rajiv Bhatia M.D., Director Occupational and Environmental Health, introduced the draft legislation.

The following are highlights of the discussion of this item:

The ordinance would create a set of nutritional standards for restaurant meals. Unless meals met the nutritional standards, a toy or incentive could not be given as part of the meal.

A similar ordinance has been adopted in Santa Clara County. The San Francisco DPH changed the Santa Clara version by adding national food standards for K- 5th graders.

The DPH has met with several fast-food establishments regarding the ordinance and efforts to improve the nutritional value of food served in these franchises.

The Obama administration is currently negotiating with several fast food chains in an effort to improve the nutritional value of their meals.

Public Comment:

Marianne Szeta of Shape-Up San Francisco stated that her organization would like this legislation passed to help decrease access to unhealthy foods and decrease the rates of childhood obesity in San Francisco.

Commission Comments/Follow-Up

The Committee members agreed that the intent of improving the nutritional value of meals is a good one but that the preferred method of making this happen is to work with restaurants rather than regulate eating options.

Action Taken: The Committee tabled discussion of the resolution.

4) FOOD INSPECTION AND SAFETY

Rajiv Bhatia M.D., Director Occupational and Environmental Health, made the presentation

The following are highlights of the discussion of this item:

San Francisco is the first city to SF first city to require posting of the entire inspection report for public viewing.

The Food Inspector staff positions are primarily funded by fees.

Several issues have led to the current vacancies in food inspector staff including retirement, disciplinary issues, promotions, and City budget issues which have slowed the release of the requisitions. Although the positions are protected, hiring freezes due to the City budget issues still impact the hiring process.

Environmental Health would like to make their section of the DPH website more user-friendly so that food inspection information is more easily accessed.

A law was passed in 2004 that stipulated scoring methods and minimum standards for frequency of restaurant inspections. Since then, there has been a shift and change in DPH management style to improve in this area. However, DPH staff vacancies have resulted in a reduction of the actual number of annual restaurant inspections.

Only routine restaurant inspections are scored. The score earned can be changed through another routine inspection although a restaurant may pay to have one additional inspection if they have made corrections and hope to be able to post a higher score.

The DPH database does not track all the informal work that the food inspection staff does with restaurants in between inspections. This includes staff education and training in addition to working to mitigate specific problems.

To be classified as a food-borne illness, four people must complain about getting sick from the same food source. During the past few years, food-borne outbreaks have decreased in San Francisco.

Public Comment:

Lydia Chavez, Editor of Missionlocal.org stated that the restaurants that score poorly on food inspections continue to do so over and over. She also stated that DPH should improve its transparency of data in the area of food inspection.

Commission Comments/Follow-Up

Commissioner Illig will draft a resolution to bring back to this Committee that addresses prioritization and protection of food inspector positions and improvement of the DPH website in regard to access to food inspection data.

The Committee commended the food inspection staff for the change in the procedure for posting a notice when there is a closure of food establishments due to poor results of a food inspection.

5) ETHNICITY GUIDELINES

Maria X. Martinez, Community Programs Deputy Director, Randy Reiter, Epidemiologist and Senior Health Planner, and Tomas Aragon M.D., Deputy Health Officer, made the presentation. The Community Assessment, System/Program Evaluation and Research (CASPER) Workgroup has been working on the guidelines to promote transparency and consistency so that the DPH reports of health by ethnicity refer to the same populations and reflect meaningful differences in health outcomes, conditions that impact health, and delivery of health services.

The following are highlights of the discussion of this issue:

The guidelines will remain interim because the terms change with societal trends.

The Committee discussed the term “mixed” as an identifier that many younger people are using instead of choosing one primary ethnicity.

The Committee recommended that presentation of this data be made to the full Health Commission.

6) EMERGING ISSUES

7) PUBLIC COMMENT

8) ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:51pm.