



WHATCOM COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 16, 2021

Present: Jake Anderson, Steve Bennett, Barry Buchanan, Sterling Chick (Chair), Leah Wainman, Lindsey Karas, Les Seelye

Absent:

Excused:

Topic	Discussion/Outcome
Call to order	Les presented a land acknowledgement. Roll call of Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) Members.
Approve Minutes	Barry moved that the minutes from the August meeting be approved as presented. Steve seconded the motion. The board voted and the motion passed. Ayes: 7, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0
Public Comment	None.
Debrief on Joint Meeting with Health Board	<p>Sterling introduced the topic, noting that PHAB has a joint meeting each year with the Health Board, which pre-COVID was being held all afternoon in person as a way to get to know each other, but this year and last year were held virtually. Holly O'Neil facilitated the joint meeting and is here today to help facilitate this debrief of the joint meeting.</p> <p>Holly shared some slides reviewing the content of the joint meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals of the joint session: 1) get acquainted and strengthen the working relationship between the Health Board, PHAB, and the Health Department Management Team, 2) Identify opportunities we would like to advance in 2022 (COVID Impacts, Racism is a Public Health Crisis Resolution. • Erika Lautenbach summarized the COVID Community Health Impact Assessment (CCHIA) and the feedback she has been getting as the report is being presented to the community, as well as the priorities for action. • Steve presented on Racism is a Public Health Crisis Resolution. Priorities for action are to get a better sense of who is working on what including communication and coordination with the Racial Equity Commission and internal County working groups. • Astrid Newell presented an overview of where things are at with Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS). • Next steps related to process issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ we need to continue to build the relationship between PHAB and the Health Board, ○ challenges for how we “stay in the room together.” • Next steps related to topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Initiatives from the Child and Family Well Being Task Force are <p>Discussion on the joint meeting included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We don't meet often enough with the Health Board. Perhaps we could build in a PHAB segment into every other Health Board meeting, which would be three times per year. Maybe a half hour PHAB segment, just engaging in one topic at a time.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could we open up a dialogue stream for PHAB and the Health Board before meetings? Because we must follow rules of the Open Public Meetings Act, this is not an option. • The Health Board doesn't really know who we are and doesn't understand our expertise. We could use more diverse PHAB engagement during the meetings to help them get to know us. • It's helpful when PHAB comes with a concrete proposal to get feedback on. We should think of the role of PHAB in developing these policy proposals as a way to develop relationships. • Conversation and communication tend to be one direction – from PHAB to the Health Board. We rarely get any feedback from the Health Board • Worked well to call on people to make sure the participation is balanced. Also, we should call out when people are going off topic. • We should operate more like the legislative process, where we are meeting members one on one and sharing our ideas with each member prior to meetings. • These are big topics and we might need to simplify some of these topics when we share them with the Health Board. These are also big topics for a volunteer board like PHAB to take on. • The relationship building piece is so important and complicated by the virtual format. • How do we break up these big topics into something digestible? • I still remember the first time Holly facilitated and the great conversations we had in small groups. • The representation on the PHAB side was pretty low, but I understand that three hours in the middle of the day is tough for volunteers. Can we look at a different time for 2022? • The elephant in the room is the politically charged nature of our discussions. Relationship building efforts should be tightly facilitated to protect our volunteers. It's challenging to relationship build right now with the political climate and what feels like unmovable lines in the sand. • How do we hold people accountable? Framing the conversations ahead of time with individual members will be useful.
--	--

<p>Foundational Public Health Services/Budget Update</p>	<p>Astrid Newell, Community Health Manager, shared a presentation on Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS). Before starting that presentation, she shared a quick announcement that Whatcom County is now an official member of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). This is an exciting step.</p> <p>Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS) are a limited and defined set of services that should be available in every community, in every public health department. Because the pandemic put public health in the spotlight, the state is allocating much more money to FPHS than in previous years - \$175 million per biennium was allocated. Astrid is involved in the work going on at the state level to decide how to allocate those funds. \$1.3 million of that money will be coming to Whatcom County. Astrid reviewed the anticipated funds available (slide included in the agenda packet). We will make requests for positions that the money will fund to Council this fall, and hoping to hire late this year or early next year.</p> <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you mean by school safety? Several years ago environmental health leaders in Washington State developed a school program looking at environmental conditions within schools including things like safe facilities, lead, air quality, playground safety, etc. The rule was passed, but without any funding attached. FPHS funds will help staff this at the local and state level so we can improve the environmental conditions at schools. • Is there any more information available about the new regulations for PHABs and Health Boards? Next week we expect a set of draft rules related to the legislation on Health Board composition. Council members have been invited to a State session to learn more about the new rules. • There are some changes that may affect PHAB. The legislation requires that PHABs (called Community Health Advisory Boards in the legislation) meet monthly and adopt a health equity framework. • Steve had an update on the Racial Equity Subcommittee. He has contacted Shu-Ling Zhao and Heather Flaherty from Chuckanut Health Foundation about the work they are doing with the Racial Equity Commission. The work of our Racial Equity Subcommittee right now is focused on determining on who is doing what and how to best coordinate our work on racial equity with others in the County. One concrete step in that work will be organizing the Health Department boards and commissions in an effort to learn more about their work on racial equity and coordinate among groups.
---	--

<p>Young Children and Families as a Priority</p>	<p>Judy Ziels, Public Health Nurse Supervisor, presented an update on work the Health Department is involved in to support young children and families, including the work of the Child and Family Well-Being Task Force and work on a health navigation system. Judy reviewed some slides about the Task Force including a timeline for the Child and Family Well-Being Task Force work and an overview of the current activities of each task force work group,</p> <p>Discussion on the work of the Child and Family Well-Being Task Force centered on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you, I want to give some accolades for this work and how it is community-driven. • When thinking of interacting with the Health Board, this is an area where there seems to be some agreement on the need to focus on child and family well-being. There is an opportunity to move these issues forward. <p>Judy continued with an update on work to develop a health navigation system intended to make it easier to find the help you need as a family when you need it, improving access to services. The focus for this effort is on families with young children, particularly families that are non-English speaking, new immigrants, or culturally diverse. At the state level, the Help Me Grow (HMG) framework is being put forward to improve service availability to families with a focus on equity. Judy reviewed some slides about this evidence-based program including the four steps of the Single Entry Access to Services (SEAS) model, the components of the interconnected system that makes up the HMG framework, and a timeline of the work on system navigation. Three counties in Washington are already implementing HMG – Pierce, King, and Yakima. We are all using their experiences to inform how we use HMG here.</p> <p>Discussion on a health navigation system for young children and families included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Representative Rick Larson and U.S. Congresswoman Suzan DelBene were in the news recently talking about Whatcom County taking in Afghan families. Can this be used to help them? Certainly, when planning a health navigation system, we look at which families have the most difficult time accessing services and new immigrant families are definitely one of those populations. We definitely look at how to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services. Thanks for bringing that up as an example. • The County government having a welcoming door via this navigation system will make a difference to thousands of families.
<p>Meeting Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Les – there is a lot on our plate, but we are moving in the right direction. I'm not sure how we get over the hurdles we are dealing with, but I know we have good people working on it. • Steve – the meeting went well. It feels good to have things moving forward. It was good to talk about making our relationship with the Health Board more functional. • Holly – it's great to see everybody and thank you for your hard work. I appreciate Sterling's leadership, hats off to Erika, Astrid, Judy, and staff, and also to Steve and Barry. Let's keep the process going. • Judy – it's wonderful to hear about the work going on. The leadership from PHAB makes a difference for our department. This was a tight meeting, good information was presented, and well facilitated. • Barry – it's good we were able to come to the realization that there are political fires surrounding public health. Recognizing the issue is the first step, now we can work on how to deal with it. Despite these challenges we are making progress. • Jake - thanks to everyone who presented - Judy and Astrid, great job. I am really looking forward to seeing how things will look as we improve that relationship with the Health Board. • Astrid – I appreciate being here. I appreciate the kudos, but also want to recognize all the other staff at the Health Department who are working so hard. I feel that sometimes, as staff, we talk a lot during these meetings, and look forward to in future meetings, staff not talking as much and giving PHAB members more change to be in the driver's seat. • Lindsey – I apologize for not making the Health Board meeting. I understand what all these families are facing with kids, and medically fragile kids. It is really exciting to hear about work going forward with the health navigation system and work to help immigrant families. • Kathleen – I appreciate the information, the reflection, and the next steps that came out of this meeting. This is a great group. • Sterling – There are a lot of things happening on racial equity and child and family well being in particular. We have opportunities to make important changes that have been pointed out to us in such a profound way by the unequalness of the damage done by this pandemic. Thanks to Judy, Astrid, Erika, Kathleen, and Cindy for all the work happening. We are going to make some specific requests of the Council and the Executive. I look forward to those next steps.

Adjourn	8:30 am
<i>Next Meeting</i>	Next regular meeting November 4, 2021, 7:00 – 8:30 a.m. <u>VIRTUAL</u>