



WHATCOM COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD SPECIAL MEETING SUMMARY

AUGUST 4, 2020

Present: Steve Bennett, Barry Buchanan, Sterling Chick - Vice Chair, Chi-Na Stoane - Chair, Leah Wainman

Absent: Barbara Juarez, Les Seelye, Lindsey Karas,

Topic	Discussion/Outcome
Addressing Racism as a Public Health Issue	<p>Astrid Newell, Community Health Manager, read a quote from the incoming President of the American Public Health Association, which is taking a strong look at racism as a public health concern. They are pulling together a number of resources for the public health community. Nationally, cities and counties are taking stand against racism as an urgent issue that needs to be addressed, and across our state several have started resolutions stating racism is a Public Health crisis.</p> <p><u>Proposed Actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft a resolution • Join GARE (Government Alliance on Race and Equity) • Allocate budget resources to address equity issues including staff training <p>Joining of GARE is not the action in itself, but is a sub-point of another initiative. GARE provides resources to help set benchmarks, and look at data through a universal lens. We would want to do an assessment to obtain a baseline and an unbiased look at where we are now, though this is not a requirement of joining GARE.</p> <p>Barry indicated that a resolution for a program that encompasses all three actions as well as training of County staff would be a great tool for the County to broadly work on the issue, and he advised getting it to the Health Board as soon as we can.</p> <p>We need to take a broad comprehensive look at what we said we want to do in promoting equity, see where we are on those items, and figure out what we can do locally and what the State is doing. The State is pushing for an office of equity.</p> <p>The Health Department is in year 4 of a 5 year cycle for accreditation with the Public Health Accreditation Board. Accreditation standards hit on the social and economic factors that impact health, and on use of data to inform processes. We can embed what PHAB is learning into that process, but it only addresses WCHD action in policy, not the broader community issues. It would be a greater benefit to have the County involved in identifying sector and discipline specific ways to impact race and equity.</p> <p>This issue has been recognized in our community and there are a lot of tie-ins to our community health improvement process. In February, a powerful training, Racial Equity Institute Workshop, was held locally. The follow up training was postponed due to COVID.</p> <p>PHAB members interested in drafting the resolution are Barry, Chi-Na, and Steve. Health Department staff will support as needed. The American Public Health Association (APHA) has links to resolutions from across the country, which we can work off of, and the latest issue of the American Journal of Public Health is completely dedicated to this issue.</p>
Addressing	<p>Les wrote a passionate statement on behalf of PHAB about taking a strong stand against racism.</p>



<p>Racism as a Public Health Issue (continued)</p>	<p>It was distributed to the board Chair and Vice Chair as well as to the Health Equity Team, the subject matter experts in the Health Department for their recommendations. Once these are received, it will be sent to the whole board for review.</p> <p>Sterling made a motion to send a resolution about racism as a public health crisis, that we join GARE, and that we talk about budget, outreach, and education to reach out to the community of color. Seconded by Barry. Approved: (5 to 0)</p>
<p>Health Protection for Immigrant Families (HPIF) Update</p>	<p>After the Health Board passed the HPIF resolution in October 2019, the HPIF Task Force dissembled. It is now PHAB's job to ensure implementation of the Work Plan actions. The group discussed recommendation #1 of the Implementation Work Plan "Build trust between immigrant families and local law enforcement"</p> <p>"1a Establish a Whatcom County Trust Ordinance that clarifies the role of local law enforcement in federal immigration enforcement, arrests, and detentions" is fairly well established in Whatcom County.</p> <p>"1b Authorize funding for the Sheriff to support outreach and relationship-building with immigrant and non-English speaking communities"</p> <p>It is our understanding that the Sheriff's Office has hired staff to do communication and outreach, but we do not know what specific steps have been taken to address the issues with immigrant and non-English speaking communities. PHAB will request a remote meeting with the Sheriff, the Sheriff's new communication officer, and a subgroup of PHAB members (Leah, Steve and Sterling) to address these items efficiently. At Barry's next meeting with Sheriff, he will ask how soon he could make time to meet and will get that information to Chi-Na. Chi-Na will send a meeting invitation. Erika will send information to Deb Slater, the Sheriff's Office Communication Officer, to bring her up to speed.</p> <p>Once we understand where the Sheriff's Office is with this, we will have a better idea of our specific asks and recommendations for actions they could take. After the conversation with the Sheriff, we will evaluate whether partners who were involved in the HPIF Task Force groups need to be involved moving forward, as well as how the immigrant community can be involved.</p> <p>Tammy will look into whether the Sheriff's Supplemental Budget Request passed last November and advise Chi-Na.</p>
<p>Child and Family Action Plan (CFAP) Review</p>	<p>The Child and Family Action Plan (CFAP) was passed in February, a month before everything closed down due to COVID. We had some very specific requests. The policy, advocacy, and funding arm of Generations Forward has been meeting since mid-May. In late May this group sent a letter to County Council to prioritize children in the response to COVID because families will be the longest effected by COVID. They sent a letter to the Executive in June and met with him and Tyler Schroeder. Carol Frazey asked for specific suggestions for CARES funding for children and inserted language stating children should be prioritized. The Family Council sent the Unhappy Hour Stories to County Council and met with Senators to advocate for children.</p> <p>A subgroup is meeting with Satpal and Tyler in August to discuss putting forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A budget proposal to create an office of family and child well-being, and a recommendation not to wait despite it being a tight budget year. They are working on messaging to the City of Bellingham and other groups about what this might look like. • A request for a linguistically appropriate navigation system, especially for families that are newly poor and have never had to navigate these systems. <p>The group is working on an ordinance to create a Child and Family Task Force. PHAB recommendations include: keep the focus narrow: young children is generally defined as under 8 years old, go as far upstream as we can, include the office of family and child well-being and its intersection with the phases,</p> <p>Barry asked how the budget would support this and that the budget request be circulated to this board so all are in the loop. He recommended we be as specific as we can and identify the timeline for the phases, and the budgetary guidance for each phase. Barry will speak to the Executive to get an idea of what level of financial information is needed for them to make decisions.</p>

	<p>Chi-Na and Sterling will work with the advocacy group to define recommendations for the timeline and benchmarks for the phases. Leah and Sterling will review and polish this, then send to Tammy to circulate to all PHAB members. A subcommittee can review and bring recommendations back to the board.</p> <p>PHAB members reviewed and discussed the potential composition of the Task Force.</p>
<p>Meeting Evaluation and Wrap up</p>	<p>I miss seeing everyone face to face, but at least we didn't have to start at 7 a.m.</p> <p>I'm happy that we don't forget things that we agreed to do. These items are so intertwined and timely that we need to get going on advocating for the vulnerable.</p> <p>The things we talked about today are impacted by COVID and we need to make sure that when we communicate about them, they are not something "other" but are the current systems exacerbating what some may feel is our primary focus.</p> <p>Wonderful job facilitating this meeting. We can't let these things slip by and get distracted by COVID and other things on our plate. Let's stay focused on what we've been working on and on health in all policies. This is my favorite meeting.</p> <p>Thanks and appreciation to Barry for support.</p> <p>Agree that we pose these items as not something separate from COVID. These are issues we have put forward in the past, and COVID just reveals the poor health outcomes that happen when these marginalized populations are put through something like this - don't separate the two. Ditto on the lovely facilitation.</p> <p>I echo the comments and share appreciation for PHAB member insight during and post COVID, and for being a great partner in Health Department work.</p>
<p>Other/Public Comment</p>	<p>None.</p>