



WHATCOM COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

SEPTEMBER 3, 2020

Present: Steve Bennett, Sterling Chick - Vice Chair, Lindsey Karas, Chi-Na Stoane - Chair, Les Seelye, Leah Wainman

Absent: Barbara Juarez, Barry Buchanan,

Topic	Discussion/Outcome
Call to order	Roll call of Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) Members
Approve Notes From Last Meeting	Moved to adopt the July 2, 2020, and August 4, 2020, meeting summaries as submitted. Approved (6 to 0)
COVID-19 Response Update	<p>Case rates have come down from their peak, and as we prepare for fall, we are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Dr. Bennett on formative research for a social marketing campaign • Having our mobile testing sites up and running • Working closely with colleges and Public School District Superintendents on State guidelines and planning • Offering technical assistance and acting as a response team for schools and colleges <p>In July School Districts asked for our recommendations and projections so they could plan for fall. Based on case numbers and projections at that time, the Health Officer wrote a letter recommending remote learning. We recently updated the letter to include State guidelines. Our role is to provide the epidemiology, forecasting, and technical assistance so the districts can do their planning.</p> <p>Reference the Department of Health decision tree for benchmark measurements to guide the schools for next semester. Thresholds are based on transmission in the community, capacity of the Health Department (HD) to do testing and case contact investigation, school plans for response in the case of an outbreak.</p> <p>The PHAB Chair expressed gratitude to managers and staff of the HD fall all the work they are doing.</p>
COVID-19 Employer Task Force Update	<p>PHAB members who were part of the subcommittee for the COVID-19 Employer Task Force provided a summary of the work of the task force which had over 140 members representing 18 sectors. These members were encouraged to inform on needs and barriers experienced in planning to open safely. The subcommittee identified sector liaisons to assist with peer-to-peer sessions, and facilitators Holly O'Neil, Mardi Solomon, and Laura Todd hosted the following forums:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let's Talk About Masks • My Employee Has Symptoms – What Now? • How Do We Support Employees During The Stress Of COVID-19? • How Do We Connect With Young Employees About COVID-19? <p>The group initiated the Safer. Stronger. Together. Campaign and website whatcomtogether.org to provide resources and information. While winding down, the Task Force identified progress as well as work left to be done for those businesses not yet able to open. Campaign work is ongoing to keep people engaged in public safety.</p> <p>Chi-Na and Erika expressed kudos and thanks for the leadership and the many hours volunteered for this task force.</p>



<p>Child and Family Action Plan (CFAP) Ordinance Update</p>	<p>The Health Board adopted the Child and Family Action Plan (CFAP) on 2/4/20</p> <p>Astrid Newell, Community Health Manager and Erika Lautenbach, Health Director, met with the County Executive. He is very supportive of the plan and is interested in being added to the reporting structure for the Child and Family Task Force. This would simplify allocation of staffing resources and promote buy-in from other departments across the County, while providing a more direct line to support and move forward the overall action of this body.</p> <p>Sterling noted that this is the worst year in his lifetime for how children will be affected in a negative way, especially young children and those already disadvantaged. We can't wait, children are being affected now and are the ones being the most damaged by this. We need to keep pushing forward and asking for things to happen at the County level and at the Executive level.</p> <p><u>Review of Draft Ordinance</u></p> <p>The group discussed the timeline and a concern that two years may be too long to achieve the goals. The current wording "no later than" builds in ability to complete the tasks sooner. Once the ordinance is passed and we get everything through County processes, it will take several months to establish the Task Force, making the first deadline of June 1, 2021, fairly challenging to meet.</p> <p>There was a motion to send this ordinance forward with agreement for minor revisions to the wording to include reporting to the County Executive. Approved (5,0) Les stepped away.</p>
<p>Addressing Racism</p>	<p>The board Chair acknowledged the time and work done by PHAB members on Health Protection for Immigrant Families.</p> <p>In a conversation with the Sheriff, he asked what other mechanisms he could use to increase advocacy. Chi-Na will email a list of items the Sheriff requested the board consider to Tammy to send to PHAB members. PHAB members are to send responses with suggestions and ideas back to Tammy to collate and distribute to members for review or include in the next PHAB meeting package.</p> <p><u>Review of Health Board Resolution and Letter to Executive</u></p> <p>At the last special meeting PHAB discussed creating a resolution to present to the Health Board to declare racism a public health crisis, as well as a letter to the County Executive requesting the County join the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) as a core member. Both documents are included in the agenda packet on pages 13 through 15.</p> <p>There was an article by Denver Pratt in the Bellingham Herald on September 2nd, which focused on racism as a public health crisis and included an interview with Health Director, Erika Lautenbach.</p> <p>Astrid Newell, Community Health Manager, expressed appreciation for the willingness to look at our county policies and dive into these deeply personal topics. She acknowledged that we are all in different places in our journey of thinking about racism and grappling with issues of privilege. This difficult work will require that we learn more about experiences and ways forward from our community and people of color who are experiencing challenges. The harder work begins as we have discussions, learn what we need to do, and make the changes.</p> <p>Chi-Na committed to reach out to Barbara Juarez to see if she will be available over the next season because we desire her perspective at PHAB meetings. If Barbara is not available, we will ask her to recommend someone for her position.</p> <p><u>Resolution Discussion:</u></p> <p>Review the document to see which bullets are highly relevant to Native Americans and immigrant populations and incorporate them as needed.</p> <p>Though our society is at a crossroads that goes beyond this crisis, this is not about pointing a finger at the police. It is a time for self-reflection. Each of us has prejudice and we all need to do better. The next step is meaningful legislation to effect change.</p> <p>The job of the PHAB and County Health Board is to lower barriers to justice and decide what we can do collectively to increase just allocation of resources, to recognize the impact of poverty and discrimination, and to understand and mitigate historic trends. As stewards of public resources, this is our primary role and responsibility as an advisory group.</p> <p>The resolution calls on the Health Board to commit to actively participating in the dismantling of remnants of racism in</p>

	<p>Whatcom County specifically through actions listed in A through F.</p> <p>To not dilute the focus on racism, the board decided to leave out age and gender in section D,. They also agreed to add a next step of seeking consultation for language to name the populations inclusive of people of color, indigenous and immigrant. Information on access to consistent, culturally appropriate, and quality health care and preventative care is strongly related to health outcomes and should be added. This could fit in the hiring practices or in the whereas statements in the area of health outcomes.</p> <p>Motion: To send the resolution on to the Health Board pending the consultation on inclusive language, pending the removal of age and gender from the hiring practices, and including a whereas that specifically addresses disparities in health care. Approved (5,0)</p> <p>Motion: To send the letter to the Executive as submitted. Approved (5,0)</p>
<p>Planning for Joint Health Board/PHAB Meeting</p>	<p>The joint meeting with the Health Board is valuable as it provides an opportunity talk to Council members one on one. We need to think about what do we want to achieve in this time. Due to lack of time, this item was postponed with a request to schedule a special meeting to discuss this topic.</p> <p>Tammy will poll PHAB members for a date to hold a special PHAB meeting with the next few weeks to discuss and plan for the October 6th joint session.</p>
<p>Other/Public Comment</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>What went well? What can we improve?</p>	<p>Every meeting is full, robust, bursting at the seams. We have so much to talk about. Hopefully everyone is being given a chance to speak.</p> <p>Meetings are jampacked and these are not small topics. It seemed more relaxed in the past, but there is more at stake now. We did well, but ran out of time for one thing. It is hard to do what we need to in an hour and a half.</p> <p>Really appreciate the leadership of this group and the rich discussion and thoughtfulness that goes into moving things forward.</p> <p>Echo that and appreciate the leadership. Department staff feel very supported by the PHAB and rely on the expertise in areas that we don't possess. This is a great opportunity to tackle these important issues together. Thank you for taking all of these challenging issues on and working them through with us.</p> <p>Echo both the previous statements. The robust discussions are truly amazing. The growth that has taken place in regards to the PHAB and the mission the board has taken on for all these topics have greatly improved. It is amazing. Thank you all for the work you are doing in Whatcom County.</p> <p>Appreciate the thoughtfulness and the work of PHAB and how it has evolved and become an effective partner in developing policy and a steward of public health in this community.</p> <p>We've had really packed agendas. When we have had the meeting with the Health Board one of the most useful things was the year end review. We should include this to ground us and show what's happened so far and where we're going in the future.</p> <p>PHAB is awesome in the amount of work and in what they've been doing. The racism issue involves a lot of self-evaluation and self-reflection. We need to apply this to the PHAB itself as well as to who makes up the membership of the PHAB, and figure out what areas that even membership of the PHAB could focus on to include individuals to help represent our community even better.</p> <p>These are action packed full agendas. We could spend hours, if not days on these topics. Appreciate moving us through the pieces while allowing space for good conversation. These are unprecedented times and we will see the impact on our children soon and far in to the future. It is timely to have this resolution on children and families. While focusing on the individual when it comes to racism is very important, as a group our role is to focus on the institution and structures in place that support racism.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to be part of the group.</p> <p>Chi-Na read the questions in chat box. The chair asked that these be sent to PHAB members.</p>