

DRAFT Meeting Notes

Public Health Advisory Council of Snohomish County

July 28, 2021 | 7:45-9:15 a.m. | Snohomish Health District | Zoom Meeting

Members present:

Jason Biermann, Snohomish County DEM
Frank Busichio, InterFaith Family Shelter
Jean Doerge, Community Member
Lisa George, PRMCE (Chair)
Robert Goetz, Everett Police Department
Kurt Hilt, International Association of Fire Fighters 1828
Patricia Love, City of Stanwood
Karri Matau, Community Foundation of Snohomish County
Shaughn Maxwell, South County Fire and Rescue
Tové Skaftun, Community Health Centers
Naisha Williams, Community Member

Staff Present:

Shawn Frederick
Dr. Chris Spitters
Nicole Thomsen
Sarah de Jong

Members not present:

Kara Briggs, Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe,
Jeff Clarke, Commissioner, Mukilteo Water & Wastewater District (Chair-Elect)
Korey MacKenzie, Diamond Knot Alehouse (Past Chair)

Comings and goings:

Kurt Hilt arrived at 7:49 a.m.
Jason Biermann arrived at 7:52 a.m.

Recording Secretary: Sarah de Jong, Executive Assistant

The meeting was called to order at 7:46 a.m. The meeting was held via Zoom video conference.

Health Officer Update

There has been a 20-30% increase in cases for the past two weeks and the two-week rolling case rate is at 140 cases per 100,000. Hospitalizations are also up over the last several weeks in July. As of midday yesterday, 36 have been hospitalized with COVID countywide with nine on ventilators. Comparing these numbers to a week ago shows a large increase - COVID hospitalizations were then in the low twenties with one to two on ventilators. The median age for hospitalizations has lowered from the 60-69 age group to 50-59.

While the delta strain doesn't seem to cause a higher proportion of hospitalizations or deaths, it proves to be more transmissible than previously circulating strains. University of Washington and CDC modelers suspect that the delta strain currently accounts for greater than 90% of transmitted COVID.

Decreased masking by unvaccinated people in indoor public places as well as social gatherings has contributed to the increase in cases. The vaccination campaign has stalled with around a quarter million adults who are eligible but have not yet started vaccination. That, combined with about 125,000 children under the age of 12 who are not yet eligible, results in a lot of people who are susceptible and the current vaccination coverage is not enough to stem the spread at the current time.

About 1.5% of the 20,000 total cases from January through June 2021 were breakthrough infections. July 1-20 shows a much higher percentage of breakthrough cases at 17% of 1,252 total cases. The large increase can most likely be attributed to the delta variant that is doing a better job of transmitting. The efficacy is still extremely high with vaccinated individuals in Snohomish County even with this widespread delta transmission just using gross numbers from cases reported and the number of people that are vaccinated. Unvaccinated people were 10 times more likely to become a confirmed case and/or die from COVID from July 1-20, which shows vaccines still protect well, especially against severe disease.

Over time, new entrants into the vaccination effort have declined and most vaccinations happening now are those finishing up their series. There is fairly good coverage in the 12-15 year old age group but things have slowed down, mirroring community-based poll data that reports only half of parents will have their kids get vaccinated. The goal is still to have an overall vaccination rate around 90% and it's estimated that about 10-15% of the community are still undecided. Looking at vaccine coverage by race/ethnicity shows Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders with the highest vaccination rate at 98%. Latinos and Whites have the lowest vaccination rates at 54% and 56%, respectively. The gap between Latinos and Whites have narrowed over time, in part due to the age structure of the Latino population being younger and as a result becoming eligible later. There has also been a concentrated effort to provide pop-up vaccination clinics for that community.

A few rare but serious adverse events have recently been associated with vaccines. CDC's advisory committee on immunization practices still finds that the benefit of being vaccinated far outweighs the risks of these events.

This past Monday, several Puget Sound Health Officers issued a joint press release recommending mask use by all in indoor settings, with the specific target being retail, restaurants, and entertainment. Yesterday, the CDC came out with a similar statement that mirrors that recommendation.

The CDC advisory committee has also reviewed data twice within the past month regarding booster doses and their current recommendation is that booster doses would only occur after evidence of declining protection against illness and there is no data to support recommendations for booster doses currently.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Mr. Kurt Hilt and seconded by Ms. Karri Matau to approve the minutes of May 26, 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

Briefings

HB 1152 & PHAC (N. Thomsen, H. Thomas)

Ms. Nicole Thomsen reviewed the new HB 1152 and how it affects the Snohomish County Public Health Advisory Council (PHAC). Ms. Lisa George noted the role the PHAC plays will also include assuring local needs and concerns are being met. Some of the changes to the PHAC will include redefining and narrowing sectors to comply with the new requirements and the need to move to a monthly meeting schedule, as opposed to the current meeting recurrence of every other month. Because the changes will need to be implemented by January 1, 2022, and some current PHAC appointments expired at the end of June, 2021, a six-month extension of those memberships will be requested for approval by the Board of Health to allow time to work on reshaping to conform to the new requirements.

There have been some initial conversations centered around the possibility of in-person meetings in September; however, that was before the continuous surge in cases, most recently in the past few weeks. Health District leadership will begin to look at possible hybrid meeting options.

A small work group will be created to incorporate the new requirements into the bylaws, create a revised update of the work plan to include this work, and perform a crosswalk for current sector designations with the legislative mandate. This work will then be reported back to the full group for their input. Ms. Patricia

Love, Ms. Jean Doerge, Ms. Lisa George, Mr. Kurt Hilt, and Mr. Jason Biermann all indicated their willingness to be part of the work group. Mr. Hilt thought it would be a good idea for a member of the Board of Health to participate as well.

2022 WA Legislative Session (N. Thomsen)

In the interest of time, this item will be discussed at the next meeting of the PHAC. Ms. Nicole Thomsen asked for members to email their responses to questions in the staff report in the agenda packet.

Equity and Public Health Practice (N. Thomsen)

Ms. Thomsen presented slides that illustrated different levels of equity. PHAC members discussed what equity is and how to become more equitable within the PHAC. Ms. Karri Matau shared that representation is one piece of creating a diverse space but that the cultural piece of discussing and understanding traditional white norms in group settings also needs to be addressed.

Administrative Officer Report

The basement has flooded and impacts moving forward with in-person meetings because of the temporary relocation of records to the auditorium.

The Sound Foundation for Public Health is making a lot of progress and is working on the last pieces of documentation before becoming a 501C.

The budget process has been started for the Health District. Snohomish County historically provides about \$2.6 million in funding specifically for tuberculosis and communicable disease control, as well as a per capita allotment. As part of the budgeting process, there is a budget amendment set for the agenda tomorrow at the special meeting of the full Board. Once that's approved, the next step is moving forward with the Health District's annual audit. There are typically three general components to the audit – State, Federal, and a compliance review from the Department of Health for all the various funding sources.

Health District leadership is currently in the preplanning phases of offering presentations to each of the city councils to discuss the progress of the Health District. This type of presentation is offered twice per year, with the second time in advance of making impact for per capita dollars. Generally, about two-thirds of the cities provide some level of per capita assistance, between .50c to a little over \$1 per capita.

Snohomish County is experiencing an increase in COVID-19 cases. Snohomish Health District operations have changed dramatically, beginning July 1, as it has taken over responsibility for multiple bodies of work including coordination for mobile clinics, mass-vaccination clinics, and isolation and quarantine. This is in addition to the work the Health District has already been performing in response to COVID, such as contact tracing, case investigation, testing sites, and outreach efforts for special populations, long-term care facilities, schools, or employers facing outbreaks. The Health District is working to increase its staff in particular to COVID response.

Upcoming meetings

The next meeting of the PHAC is September 22, 7:45 to 9:15 a.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 a.m.