

**KITSAP PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
June 4, 2024**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Tara Sell at 10:30 a.m.

Each Board member provided a brief introduction.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Stephen Kutz moved and Mayor Becky Erickson seconded the motion to approve the minutes for the May 7, 2024, regular meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

The June consent agenda included the following contracts:

- 2203, Amendment 18, *Washington State Department of Health, Consolidated Contract*
- 2265, Amendment 2, *Washington State University Extension of Clallam County, Youth Cannabis and Commercial Tobacco Prevention Program*
- 2400, *Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Summer Food Inspections*
- 2416, *Washington State Department of Health, Foodborne Illness Notification System*

Mayor Rob Putaansuu moved and Mayor Erickson seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion was approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

HEALTH OFFICER/ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Update:

Yolanda Fong, Administrator, shared one update:

- The Health District is currently participating in the annual fiscal audit for 2023, which should be completed by September. There are three significant areas of review: accountability audit, financial audit, and federal single audit. Chair Sell and Ms. Fong will be participating in a pre-conference meeting this month with the Office of the Washington State Auditor. The process includes an entrance and exit conference with the assigned auditor. Ms. Fong will send an email to the Board with additional information for members interested in attending the conference.

There was no further comment.

Health Officer Update:

Dr. Gib Morrow, Health Officer, provided the Board with several updates:

- June is Pride Month, which celebrates LGBTQ+ contributions and achievements. June also observes the holiday Juneteenth, held on June 19th, which celebrates the 1865 emancipation of enslaved Americans. Dr. Morrow thanked the Board for passing Resolution 2021-01, which acknowledged the public health impacts of structural and institutional racism, and committed to working with the community to address inequities and undo racist structures that contribute to disparate health outcomes.
- In May, Dr. Morrow participated in a reproductive justice forum sponsored by Kitsap County, in which community members shared their experiences accessing care in Kitsap. He noted that, although Kitsap women and children are underserved compared to the rest of the state and country, there are professionals working hard to continually improve care. Dr. Morrow asked the Board to read the memo from Lynn Pittsinger, Community Health Director, concerning an update around maternal and infant health work.
- Maternal and infant health teams are working closely with partners to improve and expand care access. Policy, Planning, and Innovation Analyst, Adrienne Hampton, and members of the Parent Child Health program have worked with Olympic College (OC) nursing students to create a resource guide for expecting parents. The guide will be posted to the Health District's website. The OC students presented their work to the Health District yesterday and Dr. Morrow encouraged Board members to watch the recording.
- Health District teams are monitoring H5N1 (avian flu) and are planning a response that includes testing, personal protective equipment (PPE) distribution, provider and public communications, and multi-agency coordination. They are also monitoring pertussis, measles, and dengue fever disease activity.
- Changing climates pose a challenge to public health preparedness. After an El Niño winter that left snowpacks low, the National Weather Service is predicting a hotter, drier, and smokier summer. Smoke particles present in wildfire smoke trigger cardiovascular events, such as stroke and heart attack, and exacerbate respiratory health conditions like asthma and COPD. In preparation for the weather prediction, the Health District stockpiled thousands of KN-95 masks to distribute to any organizations or people who are working outdoors during poor air quality events. The agency is also working with Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management to distribute air purifiers, communicate information about emergency cooling centers, and educate schools and other partners about conditions which require cancellation of outdoor activities.
- Later this week, the Health District will meet with several partner agencies, such as the Navy and Department of Health, to prepare for the possibility of a nuclear event in Kitsap. The presence nuclear vessels and weapons at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Bangor Naval Base poses a risk to Kitsap and the agencies want to ensure they are ready to respond to a nuclear event.
- Kitsap has experienced a dramatic rise in tuberculosis (TB) cases, a respiratory borne infectious disease, and the Health District is monitoring six active cases and several latent cases. Dr. Morrow stressed the importance of preventing the spread of TB. The Health District will be hosting a webinar on June 13th for providers and the public and encourages all medical professionals and others who are interested to attend. Former Health Officer and current epidemiologist, Dr. Scott Lindquist, and the Regional Medical

Officer, Dr. Herbie Duber, are present to answer any questions posed by the Board related to TB.

- The Health District has been working with CDC Public Health Law Legal Fellow, Maite Garcia, who will provide a presentation on strategies to bring providers together to deliver comprehensive, high quality, risk-appropriate maternal and infant care in Kitsap.
- Dr. Morrow thanked Health District employees, partners, volunteers, and students for the work they do.

There was no further comment.

KITSAP MATERNAL HEALTH CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Dr. Morrow introduced Ms. Garcia, who will be providing a presentation concerning maternal health challenges and opportunities in Kitsap.

During the presentation, Ms. Garcia discussed:

- Her background, including her work as a community health worker (CHW).
- The findings of the Health District's Community Health Assessment (CHA). CHA data shows there are challenges around accessing obstetrician/gynecological care, prenatal care, and lactation support in Kitsap.
- The need for community partners to work together to develop innovative, community-driven solutions to address health disparities in the county.
- The relationship between Medicaid reimbursement rates and access to care.
- The challenges and data were discussed during a webinar held in May and healthcare providers and professionals shared their ideas for solutions, which included better utilizing the healthcare professionals already providing services in Kitsap.
- The benefits of utilizing doulas, including a significant reduction in cesarean sections, shorter labor, higher health screening scores for infants, and lower rates of premature delivery. Ms. Garcia noted that doulas also play an important role in mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- The Washington policies related to doulas.
- The benefits of utilizing midwives, including a decreased risk for the need of a cesarean section, reduced rates of labor induction, reduced use of regional anesthesia, decreased infant mortality rates, and lower costs for clients and insurers.
- The funding and reimbursement mechanisms for midwives in Washington. Medicaid covers births in all settings and with all licensed providers, however state law limits access to birth centers based on medical criteria and risk factors. Ms. Garcia noted that starting on June 6th, licensed midwives can offer prescription authority for common prenatal and postpartum conditions. She also provided information on midwife training and certification requirements.
- The benefits of utilizing CHWs. The use of CHWs has been shown to increase the likelihood of obtaining primary care, increase mental health outcomes, and reduce the likelihood of multiple 30-day readmissions.

- Funding mechanisms for CHWs, including Medicaid reimbursement, managed care organization contracts, and Section 1115 waivers.
- The recommendations to address Kitsap health disparities that resulted from the webinar with local healthcare professionals. Recommendations included better integration of doulas, midwives, and CHWs into healthcare structures; asset mapping; improvement of efforts to increase community-level representation of stakeholders in decision-making processes; amplifying the expertise of frontline health workers; offering risk appropriate care; and increasing transparency of Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement.

Board members discussed questions around the presentation and the work to increase access to care in Kitsap.

There was no further comment.

EXPLORING THE VIABILITY OF A PUBLIC HOSPITAL DISTRICT

Susan Young, Alliance for Equitable Healthcare, shared information on public hospital districts and the process for establishing a public hospital district (PHD) in Washington.

Ms. Young's presentation noted:

- The Alliance for Equitable Healthcare is a grassroots group that was formed in 2021 and aims to work collaboratively to increase access to affordable, equitable, and comprehensive healthcare for all residents. The group consists of community leaders from both private and public sectors, as well as concerned residents from across Kitsap.
- Three recent reports highlighted similar health priority areas, including access to care: Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) published by St. Michael Medical Center, CHA published by the Health District, and Healthcare Systems Challenges and Opportunities in Kitsap County published by Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security. One recommendation from the Johns Hopkins report encouraged Kitsap to explore the feasibility of forming a PHD.
- Through listening sessions with healthcare providers, educators, and community leaders, the Alliance for Equitable Healthcare found that a lack of sustainable funding and the need for county-wide collaboration are preventing critical gaps from being addressed.

Next, Jeff Coughlin, Alliance for Equitable Healthcare, provided more information about public hospital districts. He explained:

- PHDs are community-created, governmental entity authorized to deliver health services needed to meet the physical, mental, and social needs of residents. PHDs do not operate or build a hospital, instead they offer other services. They are owned by citizens and can tailor services to meet the needs of their community.
- There are 56 PHDs in Washington, including Renton and Kennewick.
- PHDs can provide direct services, act as a funding mechanism for sustainable funding, and contract with existing and new providers to expand or enhance services.

- The process for creating a PHD, outlined in Chapter 70.44 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), requires community members to petition for the creation of a PHD, followed by a majority election to approve the establishment of the district. Once established, PHDs are governed by publicly elected commissioners who oversee district operations and policies.
- PHDs receive funding through various sources, including property taxes, grants, and revenue generated from hospital services. Mr. Coughlin said a county-wide PHD in Kitsap at \$0.35 per \$1,000 of assessed value of property would raise over \$22 million annually in property tax alone.

To conclude the presentation, Ms. Young said:

- There must be an assessment of viability to establish a PHD, including a feasibility study; an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT); and stakeholder engagement studies. The Alliance for Equitable Healthcare is currently working on developing a public education program and community survey to determine interest in a PHD.
- The alliance believes a PHD would rationalize how healthcare is supported financially in Kitsap and how it may address the needs of the community.

Board members asked clarifying questions around the presentation and PHDs.

There was no further comment.

EXECUTIVE SESSION TO REVIEW THE PERFORMANCE OF A PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PER RCW 42.30.110(G)

Chair Sell announced that the Board would recess to the closed executive session at 11:34 a.m. to discuss the performance of a public employee. She noted that the Board will adjourn after the executive session.

At 11:46, Chair Sell extended the closed executive session for 10 minutes.

ADJOURN

There was no further business; the meeting adjourned at 11:56 a.m.



Dr. Tara Sell
Kitsap Public Health Board



Yolanda Fong
Administrator

Board Members Present: *Mayor* Becky Erickson; *Member* Stephen Kutz; *Councilperson* Ashley Mathews; *Mayor* Rob Putaansuu; *Commissioner* Christine Rolfes; *Member* Dr. Tara Sell; *Member* Jolene Sullivan; *Member* Dr. Michael Watson; *Mayor* Greg Wheeler.

Board Members Absent: *Member* Drayton Jackson.

Community Members Present: Jeff Coughlin, *Alliance for Equitable Healthcare*; Dr. Herbie Duber, *Washington State Department of Health*; Dr. Scott Lindquist, *Washington State Department of Health*; Katherine Mahoney, *Virginia Mason Franciscan Health*; Tom Slyter, *Alliance for Equitable Healthcare*; Susan Young, *Alliance for Equitable Healthcare*.

Scribe: Margo Chang, *Management Analyst, Kitsap Public Health District*.

Staff Present: Nancy Acosta, *Program Manager, Parent Child Health*; Nathan Anderson, *Community Liaison, Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response*; Angie Berger, *Management Analyst, Equity & Performance Management*; Dana Bierman, *Program Manager, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention*; Karen Boysen-Knapp, *Program Coordinator, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention*; Allison Degracia, *Community Liaison, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention*; Yolanda Fong, *Administrator, Administration*; Karen Holt, *Program Manager, Human Resources*; Siri Kushner, *Director, Public Health Infrastructure Division*; Naomi Levine, *Community Liaison, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention*; Martitha May, *Community Health Worker, Parent Child Health*; Dr. Gib Morrow, *Health Officer, Administration*; Gabreiel Outlaw-Spencer, *Public Health Educator, Parent Child Health*; Lynn Pittsinger, *Director, Community Health Division*; Tad Sooter, *Public Information Officer*; Aldrin Villahermosa, *Community Liaison, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention*.