

**KITSAP PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
April 4, 2023**

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Commissioner Robert Gelder at 10:30 a.m.

Chair Gelder acknowledged that the Kitsap Peninsula is home of sovereign Indian nations, namely the Suquamish and Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Becky Erickson moved and Mayor Rob Putaansuu seconded the motion to approve the minutes for the March 7, 2023, regular meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

The March consent agenda included the following contracts:

- 2723, *Johns Hopkins University, Healthcare Assessment Project*

Member Dr. Michael Watson moved and Member Stephen Kutz seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion was approved unanimously.

CHAIR COMMENTS

Chair Gelder informed the Board he will be stepping down from the Kitsap County Board of Commissioners, effective May 23, 2023, meaning he will not be able to serve as Chair for the Kitsap Public Health Board starting in June 2023. He noted Mayor Erickson is currently Vice Chair and could be elected as Board Chair. He asked the other board members to consider moving to either Board Chair or Vice Chair, depending on if Mayor Erickson moves from Vice Chair to Board Chair at the time of the vote. This will be added to the agenda for the May 2, 2023, regular meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

HEALTH OFFICER/ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Health Officer Update:

Dr. Gib Morrow, Health Officer for the Kitsap Public Health District, began his report by explaining that this week is National Public Health Week, the theme of which is "Centering and Celebrating Cultures in Health." There is a focus for each day of the week and today's focus is Violence Prevention. He expressed gratitude to members of the Board for their ongoing work in advancing public health. He also thanked employees at the Health District for their work and commitment, as well as the many partners that help protect and promote public health.

Next, Dr. Morrow said the District convened the first Child Death Review meeting on Friday, March 31, 2023. The meeting was attended by representatives of important sectors, including mental health services, healthcare, schools and education, youth and family services, tribes, emergency management services. Dr. Morrow thanked the representatives and Health District staff for attending this meeting. He noted that there is nothing more tragic than the death of a child, and reviewing the number of cases of Kitsap children who committed suicide was particularly upsetting. Though the topic of the meeting was difficult, it was very productive.

Dr. Morrow explained that as far back as before the pandemic, experts were alarmed at the number of youths in the United States experiencing mental health crises related to anxiety and depression. The social isolation, cultural divisions, and violence that resulted from the pandemic exacerbated the mental health crises children were experiencing. In Kitsap, 40% of youth have reported experiencing at least one episode of significant depression over the past 12 months and 1 in 5 children seriously considered suicide. Nationally, youth suicide rates have increased by 70% in the years leading up to the pandemic and youth homicide rates have increased by 33%. Between 2009 and 2019, the proportion of mental health hospitalizations with suicidal patients and those who self-harm more than doubled, increasing from 30.7% to 64.2%. Overdose deaths have more than doubled from 2019 to 2020. Firearm-related injuries became the leading cause of death in youth aged 1-19 years old in 2020 and accounted for half of the increase in all-cause mortality seen during that year. Dr. Morrow said so far this year, the U.S. has averaged over one mass shooting per day, many of them occurring at schools. This has compounded the anxiety and despair felt by our youth. Readily available firearms, lethal narcotics, and malignant social media are having devastating impacts on youth in our community. These issues have disparate impacts on different age, gender, and racial groups. Children of color are suffering higher rates than white children.

Dr. Morrow said that until 2019, the country observed a centuries-old decline in all-cause mortality for children under 19 years old. From 2019 to 2020, there was an 11% increase in all-cause mortality for youth, then an 8% increase from 2020 to 2021. He stated this was due to injuries, suicide, and homicide, rather than a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Morrow said the work of the Child Death Review Panel to address underlying causes of child deaths is urgently needed. Their first meeting was very beneficial as it allowed the panel to share resources, best practices, and collaborative approaches. He said the community needs to continue to improve health education in schools, connect young people to the healthcare services they need, and make school environments safe and supportive for children. The panel discussed specific efforts to make behavioral health resources accessible and visible in schools, coordinating care across different venues, supporting families and advocating for more family therapy options, raising awareness of teacher training opportunities, and raising awareness for help lines like 9-8-8, a suicide hotline. Additional plans are underway.

Next, Dr. Morrow discussed a local initiative by the Health District's Communicable Disease (CD) program. On April 2, 2023, the CD team held an opt-out testing event at the Kitsap County Jail in which nearly 80 jail residents were tested for Hepatitis C, HIV, and syphilis. The lab results are still pending, but CD is already planning more events like this to determine the

frequency of these illnesses in this type of high-risk population. They are also working to build partnerships for telehealth treatment of Hepatitis C to get people timely treatment without overloading local healthcare providers.

Dr. Morrow then provided an update on the healthcare systems assessment, which he said is off to a strong start. The professional services contract has been signed. The advisory group met with Johns Hopkins researchers on March 29, 2023, for a progress report and to determine how the group can assist them throughout the project. He expects that the Johns Hopkins team will provide an update at the July Board meeting.

Lastly, Dr. Morrow said he is looking forward to the upcoming Drinking Water and Onsite Sewage System (DWOS) and Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) presentation. He noted that around 60,000 structures are on septic systems, with many on small lots, contiguous with surface waters. Dr. Morrow said he recently accompanied Brian Burchett, a DWOS inspector at Kitsap Public Health, on septic inspection site visits. He said he was astounded at the location and density of areas dependent on septic systems for all household effluents. He went on to explain that as the climate gradually changes and severe weather events become more common, ensuring septic systems function properly is crucial to public health. The DWOS and PIC teams work every day to protect drinking water sources, aquatic habitats, shellfish beds, property values, and the environment.

Member Kutz commented that septic systems sometimes fail laterally into aquifers and streams. He asked Dr. Morrow if there are systems in place to look at the effects on critical shorelines and streams. Dr. Morrow responded by saying the upcoming DWOS and PIC presentation will answer that question. Member Kutz also asked how Kitsap County is preparing for the need for ongoing COVID-19 testing when most of the testing instruments are CLIA-waived. He said the COVID-19 emergency order that will be ending in May allowed agencies and organizations to use these tests without adhering to the limitations that normally affect CLIA-waived tests. He noted that the Suquamish Tribe administered 27 COVID-19 tests in the last week and asked if, once the emergency order ends, these patients will need to go to a healthcare provider for testing. At Chair Gelder's request, Dr. Morrow explained that CLIA stands for Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments, which requires any facility performing laboratory tests of human specimens to be certified by the government. Healthcare providers can obtain a license to use CLIA-waived tests without having a fully certified lab. Schools, jails, organizations, and private businesses have been able to receive CLIA waivers to conduct COVID-19 tests. He said he is unaware of any impacts the end of the emergency order will have on CLIA-waived testing. Dr. Morrow noted that during the monthly call with Washington State Department of Health (DOH), he learned that the state's standing orders for COVID-19 vaccines will be ending. This means medical facilities, including long term care, will need to develop their own standing orders if they would like to continue administering vaccines. Member Kutz added that another issue is the discontinuation of free COVID-19 test kits and that he does not believe primary care providers will be able to take on additional patients for COVID-19 testing. He asked that the Health District and the Board discuss this issue further. Dr. Morrow noted the Health District continues to provide test kits to the community, though the supply will likely dwindle.

Regarding the opt-out testing done at the jail, Dr. Watson asked if people who test positive received treatment that was covered. Dr. Morrow said as long as they are in the Kitsap County Jail, there is a medical presence on site. The Health District has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the jail to provide them with penicillin for treatment of jail residents with syphilis. The treatment of Hepatitis C and HIV is more complex, so the Health District will need to develop a system with the jail to connect patients with the appropriate treatment or healthcare provider. Dr. Morrow added the residency program at St. Michael Medical Center may be an option they explore. Chair Gelder noted that one of the largest contracts the jail has is for medical care.

There was no further comment.

Administrator Update:

Keith Grellner, Administrator at the Kitsap Public Health District, began his report by introducing himself.

Next, Mr. Grellner discussed the 2023 Legislative Session Update for Kitsap Public Health's legislative priorities. He thanked Megan Moore of Kitsap Public Health for drafting the legislative update. There have been no new bills involving public health. Regarding the budget, both the House and Senate budget are favorable to continued Foundational Public Health Services investments in the state public health system. Both budgets include about \$100 million of additional funding for the next biennium as well as funding for commercial tobacco prevention to prevent youths from using tobacco. The Health District will continue tracking the budget process as it develops and will reach out to the Board with additional updates when applicable.

Mr. Grellner then discussed recent improvements that the Health District has made for sewage spill response procedures. Anytime there is a significant sewage spill, usually from large municipal wastewater collection systems, the Health District takes a number of steps to respond, including notifying the public, assessing the spill, sampling, and posting warning signs. Mr. Grellner explained that in the Fall of 2022, the Health District conducted a survey to determine if the public was receiving sewage spill notifications, how the notifications were being received, the level of knowledge the public has around the Health District's sewage spill response work, and asked for suggestions on how to improve our messaging. Based on the feedback obtained through the survey, Kitsap Public Health adjusted the procedure for sewage spills. The changes include new signage with QR codes to link people more easily to water quality information on the Health District website and to help the public sign up for water quality advisories. Business cards containing information on public health advisories were supplied to fish license dealers and were placed at the front counters for distribution to the public. Mr. Grellner thanked everyone who responded to the survey. He said the Health District has been doing this work for over 30 years and the agency is always working on refining procedures as the population changes. He hopes this will make information more accessible and will help the community take better care of the environment.

Next, Mr. Grellner said the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) and the Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials (WSALPHO) have partnered with a PhD student at Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania to study how local health boards function and how they influence public health practice. The partnership is looking for volunteers to help with the study by participating in a 1-hour interview. Mr. Grellner will send Board members a copy of the invitation email following today's meeting and asked that members notify him if they are interested.

Mr. Grellner then reminded the Board of the Local Board of Health Training held by WSAC and WSALPHO. He said the training is May 2-4 at Semiahmoo in Whatcom County. The registration information was sent to Board members after the March Board meeting. He added that the training and lodging is being paid for by the event's sponsors.

Lastly, Mr. Grellner notified the Board that Siri Kushner has been promoted to director of the new Public Health Infrastructure Division and started in her new position on April 3. He said Ms. Kushner has been the Health District's Assistant Director of Community Health for several years and congratulated her on the promotion.

Chair Gelder congratulated Ms. Kushner on her promotion to division director. He added that he is very pleased to hear that the House and Senate budgets were so consistent with each other and hopes that they work forward to reconcile the two budgets, increasing the likelihood that the resulting budget will be at the same dollar-level. Mr. Grellner noted that at this point, the District prefers the House budget as it is less specific in its earmarks for certain parts of the system. He said the Senate's budget funding is earmarked and categorical. The legislature set up the Foundational Public Health Services steering committee, which Mr. Grellner and Member Kutz are a part of, to make decisions on how to allocate funding. When the legislatures make their own decisions in how to allocate funding like the Senate budget, it makes the committee nervous, but Mr. Grellner noted they have faith in the Senate leaders.

There was no further comment.

KEEPING OUR WATERWAYS CLEAN PRESENTATION

John Kiess, Kitsap Public Health's Environmental Health Director, began the presentation by introducing himself to the Board. He said that he is very proud to share the presentation with them. The Health District's Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) and Drinking Water and Onsite Sewage System (DWOS) programs are considered model programs for local health jurisdictions across counties, the state, and the nation. Other LHJs use their model to implement regulatory requirements and to develop effective policies and procedures. Both programs have existed for decades and have long-established regulations and processes that have been put into place by previous and existing Health District Leaders who had the foresight and understanding of how to build a sustainable program that protects the health of the community. The Board's support of the PIC and DWOS programs has been an instrumental part of their success. A large part of the success is due to Health District staff who perform the day-to-day management and operations of the program functions and who are passionate about the community's health. Mr.

Kiess thanked the program staff and said he hopes the presentation helps the Board appreciate the hard work they do. He noted that he has worked in both programs, alongside the program managers as their coworker. He said he appreciates their ability to maintain program direction, efficiency, and ability to remain adaptive to emerging issues as they come up.

Next, Kimberly Jones, Kitsap Public Health's program manager for Drinking Water and Onsite Sewage Systems, introduced herself to the Board. She displayed photos of the DWOS program's inspectors and introduced Zach Ahlin and Christine Bronder, who were attending the Board meeting. Currently there are 11 inspectors in the program who work in all parts of Kitsap County and most of them spend 60-70% of their time in the field doing inspections.

Ms. Jones explained that an onsite sewage system treats wastewater from private residences, restaurants, or other structures that produce less than 3,500 gallons of effluent per day. Larger systems that produce more than 3,500 gallons per day are regulated by the Washington State Department of Health (DOH). Ms. Jones noted that there are currently more than 57,000 onsite sewage systems in Kitsap County. Of those, 12,500 are alternative systems, rather than standard gravity or pump-to-gravity. Alternative systems are more complex and require routine inspection and maintenance by licensed maintenance providers. She added that the average age of septic systems in Kitsap is 33 years old.

Ms. Jones said the DWOS program permits systems for new construction proposals. They evaluate and approve locations of septic systems in accordance with State and Local ordinances. Inspectors review site conditions, setbacks from structures and water sources, soil types, and water supplies.

Next, Ms. Jones explained the steps taken when a septic system fails. A septic designer completes a diagnosis of the failure and submits a repair plan to the Health District. Inspectors review and work with the designer to develop an approved septic design. Once a plan is approved, a licensed septic installer purchases a permit to complete the installation. Once the system is installed, inspectors will inspect the system to be sure it aligns with ordinances prior to it being covered with soil. Ms. Jones noted that staff inspected 201 repair drainfield installations in 2022.

Grant Holdcroft, Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) program manager at the Health District, then took over the PIC portion of the presentation. He said the PIC program's mission is to protect the public from waterborne illness and other water quality-related hazards. Water that is polluted with fecal bacteria is their primary concern as it can make people sick when swimming or eating shellfish.

Next, Mr. Holdcroft explained the common sources of fecal pollution. These sources can include stormwater runoff, sewage spills, wildlife waste, livestock or farm waste, pct waste, and failing septic systems. A large part of PIC's function is to find and correct the failing septic systems. He said they typically receive a report of a failing system through concerned citizens or septic pumpers. All complaints are investigated to determine if they have merit. Mr. Holdcroft then displayed photos of PIC inspectors in the field.

Mr. Holdcroft explained that when PIC finds a septic system experiencing problems such as failure, they work with the homeowner to correct it by ensuring a septic designer creates a repair plan to the DWOS program, who then helps with the septic design and installation process. A large piece of PIC's work is offering education on the workings of a septic system, guiding the homeowner through the repair process, and offering financial resources to help with the repair. Occasionally, they need to encourage compliance by conducting enforcement activities. Other aspects of PIC's work includes the monitoring of streams, lakes, beaches, shellfish, and shorelines; water pollution and septic education; pollution investigations on streams, shorelines, and shellfish growing areas; and informing the public of fecal pollution concerns. Mr. Holdcroft displayed pictures of the PIC inspectors doing their duties in the field. He noted that each month, the program monitors and samples 69 streams.

Next, Mr. Holdcroft highlighted the PIC program's work with Chico Creek. He said Chico Creek flows through the heart of Kitsap and is the county's most productive salmon stream. Fecal pollution in the creek had caused closures of shellfish harvesting in the area. For the last six years, the PIC team has been focusing on reducing bacteria in the watershed, utilizing a number of strategies to reduce cumulative pollution from septic systems, sewer overflows, wildlife, and agriculture. Staff corrected more than 15 failing septic systems and five animal waste sources in the watershed. They also responded to illegal dumping complaints, sewer system spills, pet waste accumulations at large apartments, and provided boater education. Mr. Holdcroft said that, as a result, DOH reclassified 50 acres in Chico Bay from a "Prohibited" status to "Approved." Mr. Holdcroft reiterated the importance of education, both in classrooms and in the community.

Mr. Holdcroft then presented the 2022 Water Quality Report, which has been published as a story map for ease of use. Four different graphs were used to display data indicating the amount of pollution in waterways has been steadily decreasing year after year. He also displayed the interactive map and data dashboard that can be accessed through the report, allowing the public to check the water quality of Kitsap waterways in real time.

Mayor Erickson asked if the PIC program was still using microbial source tracking (MST) in order to identify which organisms are the source of pollution. Mr. Holdcroft responded by saying the Health District has not renewed their contract with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to do MST. During the pandemic, the contract had lapsed, though Mr. Holdcroft said the program will work to reestablish the contract. Mayor Erickson agreed that step should be taken as the solution to pollution issues depends on whether it is coming from animals or humans.

Member Kutz asked what the total acreage for shellfish beds were in Kitsap County. Mr. Holdcroft said DOH manages a map that tracks shellfish acreage. Mr. Kiess added that the Health District can track areas of shellfish beds by using shoreline mileage to assess that. He went on to say acreage is calculated by depth, so that may not be the best indicator for the effectiveness of PIC's work. Mr. Kiess said Kitsap has almost reached saturation in the miles of shoreline open, discounting the shorelines that are permanently closed due to a military base or industrial pollution. He said around 95% of shorelines are open, out of all shorelines eligible to

be opened. Member Kutz asked if Mr. Kiess would send him the total acreage of shellfish areas in Kitsap and Mr. Kiess said he would send that number after today's meeting.

Member Kutz also noted that shorelines are critical and asked how the Health District addresses septic systems that used fill, making it difficult to manage underground streams. Mr. Kiess said, in theory, current septic regulations would likely prevent that situation from occurring. He added that additional building permit regulations would likely prevent an area with historic fill from being developed. The Health District tries to prevent septic systems from being installed in any high-risk areas. Member Kutz then asked if the United States Navy works with the Health District to monitor the shellfish beds located on their property. Mr. Kiess said most of those areas are not approved for shellfish as they are not publicly accessible, though the Navy works closely with the state DOH. Those areas will likely never be open due to industrial waste or a sewage treatment plant's outfall. Member Kutz said he has a number of other questions and hopes to discuss them with Mr. Kiess and Mr. Holdcroft at a later date.

Dr. Watson said the presentation mentioned multiple episodes with Island Lake and Kitsap Lake. He asked if those two lakes consistently get red-flagged due to unique similarities in their environments. Mr. Kiess said they are relatively closed basins and have dense development around them. When cyanobacteria or blue green algae advisories occur, the nutrient loading into the lakes causes conditions where algae will bloom. This type of algae can produce toxins that are harmful to humans and animals. He summarized that a combination of the historical development of the two lakes and that they are naturally closed systems in terms of outflow and inflow, the nutrients are captured in the cycle of algae blooms. Chair Gelder asked if nutrient loading is synonymous with septic failures. Mr. Kiess said it is not synonymous and can be caused by a variety of situations. It is likely the natural cycles with lake sediment and accumulation of nutrients in the sediment. Even if some of the external causes were removed, the system would continue to cause algae blooms.

Mayor Erickson asked Mr. Kiess if the PIC program is committing to renewing the contract for MST. Mr. Kiess said they would work with the EPA to see if the agency is still willing to support the Health District in that work. He said MST is valuable, though it is one tool of many the program uses to improve water quality. The most important goal is to find the source of pollution and if PIC is able to determine the source, MST is not necessary. Mr. Kiess reiterated that the program is committed to having that tool available for situations in which the source of pollution cannot be identified. Mr. Holdcroft added that in the partnership between the EPA and the Health District, the EPA developed the method to ensure it is scientifically defensible. The EPA gathered data from Kitsap MST results to build a library of potential sources of pollution. He said the problem is MST is very expensive when it is not completed through a partnership with the EPA. He agreed with Mr. Kiess and Mayor Erickson that the tool is important, but the Health District must be cautious in the way they obtain that capability to make the most of public funds.

Chair Gelder thanked the DWOS and PIC teams for the presentation. He said it was a great way to illustrate the partnership between the two Health District programs and other partners, such as Clean Water Kitsap.

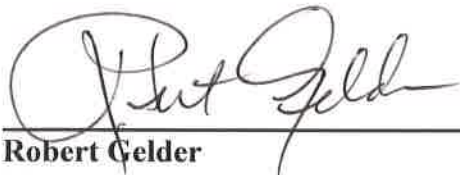
There was no further comment.

EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO RCW 42.30.110 (1)(G) TO REVIEW THE PERFORMANCE OF A PUBLIC EMPLOYEE

Chair Gelder announced that the Board would recess to the closed executive session at 11:34 a.m. to discuss the performance of a public employee.

ADJOURN

There was no further business; the meeting adjourned at 11:44 am.



Robert Gelder
Kitsap Public Health Board



Keith Grellner
Administrator

Board Members Present: *Mayor Becky Erickson; Commissioner Robert Gelder; Councilperson Kirsten Hytopoulos; Member Stephen Kutz; Mayor Robert Putaansuu; Member Jolene Sullivan; Member Dr. Michael Watson; Mayor Greg Wheeler (attended the Executive Session only).*

Board Members Absent: *Member Drayton Jackson; Member Dr. Tara Kirk Sell.*

Community Members Present: *None.*

Staff Present: *Zachary Ahlin, Environmental Health Specialist 1, Drinking Water and Onsite Sewage Systems; Angie Berger, Management Analyst, Administrative Services; Christine Bronder, Environmental Health Specialist 1, Drinking Water and Onsite Sewage Systems; Margo Chang, Administrative Assistant, Administrative Services; Yolanda Fong, Director, Community Health Division; Keith Grellner, Administrator, Administrative Services; Grant Holdcroft, Program Manager, Pollution Identification and Correction; Karen Holt, Program Manager, Human Resources; Kimberly Jones, Program Manager, Drinking Water and Onsite Sewage Systems; John Kiess, Director, Environmental Health Division; Brandon Kindschy, Environmental Health Specialist 1, Pollution Identification and Correction; Siri Kushner, Director, Public Health Infrastructure Division; Victoria Lehto, Environmental Health Specialist 1, Pollution Identification and Correction; Ross Lytle, Senior Environmental Health Specialist, Pollution Identification and Correction; Megan Moore, Community Liaison, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention; Dr. Gib Morrow, Health Officer, Administration; Sydney Perales, Public Health Educator, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention.*

Zoom Attendees: *See attached.*

Kitsap Public Health Board Meeting (Virtual Attendance)

Webinar ID	Actual Start Time	Attendee Count
861 8605 2497	4/4/2023 10:30	33

NAME	NAME	JOINED BY PHONE
Sam Ader	Michelle McMillan	None
Leslie Banigan	Anne Moen	
Winnie Borja	Kaela Moontree	
Karen Boysen-Knapp	Alex Moore	
Susan Brooks-Young	Dawn Morris	
Marci Burkel	Kevin Nguyen	
Callie Burton	Greg Noble	
April Fisk	Kayla Petersen	
Jakob Hughes	Steve Powell	
Kirsten Hytopoulos	Ally Power	
Wendy Inouye	Kelsey Stedman	
Thomas Jury	Erica Whares	
Sarah Kinnear	Janet Wyatt	
Melina Knoop	Dave	
Crystal Koch	Chris & Suzanne	
Melissa Laird	Fireflies.ai Notetaker Kayla	