

**Meeting Minutes**  
**November 18, 2021**  
**Regular Meeting**

The meeting was held via Zoom conference call/video.

**Committee members present via Zoom**

Elisabeth Crawford  
Dan Rankin  
Linda Redmon

**Committee members absent**

Jared Mead  
Jeff Vaughan

**Staff present**

Shawn Frederick, Ragina Gray, Nicole Thomsen, Heather Thomas, Katie Curtis, Carrie Parker, Pam Aguilar, Sara Centanni, Sarah de Jong

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**Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Program Policy Committee was called to order by Committee Chair Ms. Linda Redmon at 3:31 p.m. via Zoom video conference.

**Roll Call**

Roll call was taken by Ms. Sarah de Jong who reported there was a quorum present.

**Approval of Minutes**

It was moved by Mr. Dan Rankin and seconded by Ms. Elisabeth Crawford to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of October 21, 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

**Action Items**

*Approve Res. 21-23: Adopting PHAC bylaws and membership in compliance with RCW 70.46.140, and forward to the full Board on consent (SR 21-114; N. Thomsen)*

These changes to the bylaws are needed due to the requirements regarding the reformation of local boards of health in House Bill 1152. The Public Health Advisory Board (PHAC) created an ad hoc committee that has met four times to revise the bylaws. These revisions have also been reviewed by legal counsel and are in compliance with the requirements set forth by legislation. Ms. Nicole reviewed additional changes made since this item was last presented to this Committee. Mr. Dan Rankin requested that rural community representation be considered when defining position descriptions for PHAC sector representations.

It was moved by Ms. Crawford and seconded by Mr. Rankin to approve Res. 21-23: Adopting PHAC bylaws and membership in compliance with RCW 70.46.140, and forward to the full Board on consent. The motion passed unanimously.

*Authorize the Administrative Officer to execute amendment #24 to the consolidated contract with the Washington State Department of Health, and forward to the full Board on consent (SR 21-115; K. Curtis)*

This amendment includes many changes to the consolidated contract, including:

- Work added for the tobacco prevention program.
- COVID funding:
  - Removal of \$2.7M from the budget for the Box in the Virus.
  - Almost the same amount as the above was added into the federal fiscal year 20 local health jurisdiction allocation, moving that up to \$11.9M.
  - An additional 5,000 was added for COVID vaccine funding, bumping that total number up to \$2.8M
- Revisions of some of the date in the contract. Some of the dates in the contract is set to continue through 2023, and it's expected for more development of that in the new year.
- Removal of \$16,000 for viral hepatitis funding in the infectious disease section.
- Removal of \$15,000 for ADAP rebate funding, which is a bit of money received to help connect HIV-positive clients to care. This funding was moved down into the federal fiscal year 21 (FFY21) grant.
- Additional \$163,000 added for STD funding, primarily for syphilis case investigation. The Health District is currently hiring two disease investigators to help with the amount of surplus that has increased in the county.
- Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS):
  - \$1.2M for reinforcing capacity
  - \$30,000 to conduct a Community Health Assessment, or if that's completed to follow up with a Community Health Improvement Plan.
  - \$497,000 for communicable disease work
  - \$164,000 for hepatitis C work.
  - 1.1M for environmental health.
  - It's anticipated the funds for FPHS will remain the same for fiscal years 2022 and 2023.

The total amount for this amendment adds \$2.9M for a total consideration of \$40M.

It was moved by Ms. Crawford and seconded by Mr. Rankin to authorize the Administrative Officer to execute amendment #24 to the consolidated contract with the Washington State Department of Health, and forward to the full Board on consent. The motion passed unanimously.

*Authorize the Administrative Officer to hire a temporary term-limited community health outreach worker for the refugee health outreach program, and forward to the full Board on consent (SR 21-107; K. Curtis)*

The Washington State Department of Health has offered to provide local health jurisdictions up to \$100,000 to hire a temporary community health worker who would be doing outreach to the refugee and immigrant populations in Snohomish County to help encourage them to get vaccinated for COVID. This position would act as a kind of ambassador from public health into these communities to help remove barriers, such as assistance in signing up for appointments. The funding would run through the end of May 2023 so this would not be a permanent position within the Health District, but would complement our current vaccine work currently being performed in the community. The position will be term-limited and include benefits. An ideal candidate would be someone with foreign language skills, specifically Ukrainian.

It was moved by Ms. Crawford and seconded by Mr. Rankin to authorize the Administrative Officer to hire a temporary term-limited community health outreach worker for the refugee health outreach program, and forward to the full Board on consent. The motion passed unanimously.

*Authorize the Administrative Officer to extend an existing agreement with Buenavista Service, Inc. to provide janitorial services at the Rucker Building from Jan 1. To Dec. 31, 2022, and forward to the full Board on consent (SR 21-112; S. Frederick)*

In 2019, the Health District was previously contracted with another vendor for this service. That contract was set to cost between \$95,000-100,000 and so the Health District decided to solicit quotes to see if

the service could be done for less. Buenavista submitted their proposal with a new cost of around \$53,000. When the WIC program was discontinued at the Health District, that amount dropped to around \$51,000 but some of that space is expected to be utilized in the next year and staff are expecting the amount paid for services to increase to around \$54,000. A new amendment will be created at that time to allow for the increase in service. Staff are requesting a second and final extension allowed by the contract for this service through the end of 2022.

It was moved by Ms. Redmon and seconded by Mr. Rankin to authorize the Administrative Officer to extend an existing agreement with Buenavista Service, Inc. to provide janitorial services at the Rucker Building from Jan 1. To Dec. 31, 2022, and forward to the full Board on consent. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Briefings**

*Health Officer update (no staff report; C. Spitters)*

Case Rates. The overall trend of cases is a decline from the peak in late August/early September that continued through mid-October and has been a bumpy course since then with no clear trajectory. Case rates remain at a high level of transmission with a two-week case rate for the county in the mid three hundreds. This is a phenomenon that many people in the modeling world predicted for this autumn wave which started in late July/early August. This trend may continue at a relatively high level of transmission and is likely where transmission rates will remain for the next several months, as we work our way through the winter.

School-Aged Children. Through the end of October, the proportion of cases among school-aged children has gone up since school resumed. While there have been many clusters and outbreaks of cases in schools, there's still not a lot of transmission and school outbreaks were less in October-November than in September. The largest outbreak in any of the schools so far was one with 21 cases. The average number of cases in a school-related outbreak is five to six and 80% have 10 or fewer cases. This has an impact not only on children's education but also on school administration because they are our onsite partner in tracking down contacts and so this speaks to the benefits of the vaccination effort in these kids that will mitigate transmission, reduce the number of cases among school-aged children, and protect them from having to be quarantined when they get exposed at school.

Pediatric vaccinations have begun rolling out for the 5-11 year old age range and through today, that age group already has about 10.5% of eligible children who have initiated vaccination in Snohomish County. There are approximately 75,000 children in the 5-11 age range in Snohomish County that are now eligible for the Pfizer pediatric vaccine. With about 10,000 such doses coming in each week, it will take about three to four months to reach saturation.

Hospitalizations. There have been no hospitalizations of youth recently. Most of the hospitalizations are in middle-aged adults, which is that intersection of exposure and lower vaccination coverage than their older counterparts and vulnerability based on age. Snohomish County has a lower rate of hospitalizations per capita than either King or Pierce County. However, the proportion of COVID-hospitalized clients on ventilators is higher than both. This could be due to local hospitals discharging patients once a patient's oxygen levels is at a certain level, which is sooner than other counties. Once discharged, many of these patients receive at-home oxygen services as they continue to recover.

Case Investigations. Case investigators are currently able to reach about 10 – 15% of people newly diagnosed with COVID to perform case investigations and try to get them to stay home for 10 days. Almost half of those called completely evade case investigators. This results in a low number of new quarantines for reported cases assigned to the system. These results are not specific to Snohomish County and are being experienced throughout the state. Due to the diminished results, the Health District is looking at relegating case investigation and contact notifications back to the State and then focusing those resources in other areas that may be more productive and yield greater results.

Vaccine Effectiveness. The effectiveness of the vaccine has declined with time. This is probably due to both the introduction of the Delta variant and the effectiveness of the initial vaccination diminishing with time. In Snohomish County, 85-90% of people who die from COVID are unvaccinated. Deaths that occur in those who are fully vaccinated typically are extremely old and/or have other underlying conditions. It's very rare to see a healthy middle- or young-aged adult who's fully vaccinated end up in the ICU or die from COVID.

### **Informational Items**

Ms. Redmon reviewed the upcoming meetings.

### **Next Meeting Date**

Full Board of Health: Tuesday, December 14, at 3:00 p.m.

Program Policy Committee: Thursday, December 16, at 3:30 p.m.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

DRAFT