

Public Health Advisory Council (PHAC) Meeting Minutes

May 10, 2022



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



ATTENDING: Madhavi Bharadwaj, Nicole Bowles, Eileen Derr, Jennifer McElravey, Afam Okoye, Hemi Pariyani, Julie Scotland, Larysa Thomas

ABSENT: Sonja Ackman, Rachel Arnold, Robin Bousquet, David Eppelsheimer, Commissioner Nafisa Fai, Andrea Lara Silva, Dick Stenson, Annie Paulsen, Leticia Vitela

STAFF: Dr. Marie Boman-Davis, Alex Coleman, Lainie Clem, Sheri Lilli

GUEST PRESENTERS: Rebecca Collett and Annalea Egging

Welcome

Jennifer McElravey started the meeting with introductions and an ice breaker.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Review and approval of April's minutes were delayed until the June PHAC meeting due to the number of absences, late arrivals, and limited time.

Universally Offered Home Visiting

PHAC members received an update on the Washington County Family Connects Program in its first stage of implementation. This program is run by the Public Health Maternal, Child and Family Program at Washington County. See PowerPoint for more details.

- With as many as 40% of women not attending postpartum visits (and an even higher percentage among those with limited resources and other barriers), it has been evident that Oregon has needed a program to reach all families with newborns.
- [Senate Bill 526](#), effective September 2019, was passed in the effort to establish Family Connects Oregon, which would launch in February of 2020, in a phased implementation over three biennia. Washington County was selected as an early adopter of this program, launching their first phase in June 2021.
- The Family Connects model includes approximately three home visits by a registered nurse to assess the health and needs of newborns and their families. The nurse assists the family to connect with community resources and organizations specific to their needs and gathers data to monitor the health of the infants and their families for the duration of their interactions.
- Two registered nurses are engaging in home visits currently, and both are nearing completion of their certifications for providing lactation assistance. They have completed over 110 home visits since last June and have made over 250 referrals and recommendations.
- Still in its first phase, eligibility in Washington County is limited to certain birth hospitals, county residency, and enrollment in Oregon Health Plan. By its final phase, Family Connects seeks to provide supports to all parents and families at no cost, regardless of income or background.

- Washington County partnered with Providence St. Vincent Medical Center at its launch in 2021 and expanded to include the Hillsboro Medical Center in May 2022. The next expansion will be to integrate Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs).
- [Senate Bill 1555](#), which goes into effect on January 1, 2023, specifies that commercial insurance companies are required to reimburse Family Connects Oregon for these services. Washington County is working with OHA to establish rules and rates for reimbursement with commercial payors by the January 1st deadline.
- Dr. Boman-Davis added that the Family Connects Oregon platform will be built-out over time to include community-based organizations as well.

Q & A

Q: Is Family Connects currently only available to Medicaid patients?

A: Yes. More specifically, it is open to all Oregon Health Plan (OHP) participants, including Care Oregon, Providence, etc.

Q: How do we care for patients with different language or cultural needs?

A: Thus far, translation services have not been necessary. One of our two current nurses is English-Spanish bilingual/bicultural, which has worked well, as a sizeable share of the families we serve speak Spanish. All our written materials are in English and Spanish, and we plan to add additional languages. We also have numerous textbook resources in English and Spanish that we would like to obtain in other languages as well.

Q: Service is free to those covered by OHP, but what about people covered by other insurance plans? And when you give referrals, are those services free?

A: When Family Connects is expanded, the service will be free for everyone. We provide approximately three home nurse visits, but we are unable to pay for additional services, including those that we have referred. Our efforts are focused on working with partners who can offer services for free, at a reduced cost, on a sliding scale, or for free for a percentage of the population.

Q: What happens to situations involving preterm babies or infant deaths?

A: For newborns who are in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), the nurse will visit the mother or family in the NICU. Their goal is to visit twice in the NICU and once when the baby is home. Nurses try to arrange a home visit at least once with families who have experienced an infant death, to assess the mother's health and ensure that the family has referral connections for physical and mental health resources.

Budget Update

PHAC members received an update on the 22-23 budget proposal released Monday, May 9, 2022. The Council was advised of a second Budget Committee Meeting scheduled on Thursday, May 12, 2022 (5:30-8:30 p.m.), which they were encouraged to attend live or view afterward (see below for meeting links). After a period of questions and answers, the Council voted to provide a letter of support and/or public testimony at the County Budget Committee Public Hearing on Thursday, June 2, 2022 (5:30-7:30 p.m.).

[Washington County Budget Committee Meeting presentations](#)

- Due to several factors, Washington County has enacted a hiring pause while they assess a sizable gap between expected revenue and the proposed budget for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Public Health Division Manager, Dr. Marie Boman-Davis, explained that the county is required to put out a balanced budget each year, and a pause on hiring is just one tool they are exercising while they reprioritize positions that were planned, and discuss strategies to close the budget gap. We understand that the budget for Public Health that was put forward for BCC consideration will have a slight increase from the previous fiscal year; however, will be approximately 1 million less than requested.
- The Public Health Division was fortunate to have recently filled several positions before the hiring pause, but there are several now pending, including the Public Health Deputy Division Manager.
- PHAC members were asked by Dr. Boman-Davis if there was interest in providing a letter of support and/or public testimony at the County Budget Committee Public Hearing on June 2. Jennifer McElravey made a motion to write a letter and provide public testimony. Madhavi Bharadwaj seconded the motion. All in favor and none opposed. The motion was passed. Jennifer McElravey will provide public testimony.

Q & A

Q: When funds are requested, is money then earmarked for the request, so you have an idea what might get cut?

A: This year is a unique outlier, unlike any that the county has experienced in the past. Navigating between ARPA funds, General funds, and Modernization funds has been complicated. Dr. Boman-Davis made recommendations for potential cuts in Public Health, but none of them were selected. She also made a request that Public Health be allowed to reprioritize when the budget cuts are announced, but there is no guarantee.

Q: It appears that the decisions for where the cuts will be is in the hands of the Finance Division. Isn't that backward? Do they have the knowledge necessary to prioritize cuts based on needs?

A: At the beginning of each fiscal year, all county organizational units must propose their budget following County guidance (e.g., flat, with little or no change, or reduced from the previous year). When the proposed unit budgets are compiled, the budget must balance. Unfortunately, we do not have visibility to what each unit proposes, nor do we have an established process to recommend how General fund is prioritized. If high-level finance observes a gap between what is requested and the revenue they have projected, they formulate a strategy for reducing the gap. Safeguarding cost of living adjustments (COLA) and avoiding furloughs or lay-offs for employees were key components of their strategy this year.

Presenter Guidance Discussion

PHAC members had an opportunity to provide input regarding their expectations for PHAC presentations. Alex Coleman incorporated the feedback provided in past meetings and presented the draft to the council. Several more suggestions were added. A motion to approve the Presenter Guidelines with the additional input was made by Jennifer McElravey and seconded by Hemi Pariyani. All in favor and none opposed. The PHAC Presenter Guidelines were approved.

Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool

PHAC members received an overview of the proposed federal screening tool created to support climate justice spending and were given a brief demonstration on its use. Members were asked

to vote on whether they would like to provide official feedback on the tool. Members requested additional time to explore the tool further before they decided. Alex Coleman will send members information about the tool and the tool link in a follow-up email. Members are asked to submit their vote by email.

- In 2021 the Biden Administration issued executive order 14008 to address climate justice across the government. The tool contains a set of environmental and social factor indicators, which can be helpful in determining whether a community is considered disadvantaged.
- Members were asked to look at the factors being considered; does it appear that the factors are being accurately evaluated? Are any key factors left out? Do the 40 indicators capture everything? Is the format clear and easy to understand?
- Due to time, the group will vote via email following the meeting to determine whether or not to submit formal feedback on the Beta version of the tool

Closing

Jennifer McElravey closed out the meeting. The next meeting will be June 14, 2022, via Zoom.