

Board of Health Record Of the Proceedings – Skagit County, Washington

Date: March 23, 2021

The Skagit County Board of Health met in regular session on Tuesday, March 23, 2021, with Connie Davis, MD, Aaron Katz, CPH, Commissioner Ron Wesen, Chair Peter Browning, and Commissioner Lisa Janicki present.

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Browning called the telephonic proceedings to order at 2:01 p.m. and performed roll call.

II. AGENDA:

a) 2:01 p.m. Approval of Board of Health Minutes:

A motion was made by Aaron Katz, CPH, to approve the minutes for Friday, February 5, 2021. Commissioner Wesen seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

1. Record of the Proceedings for Friday, February 5, 2021. **(Approved)**

b) 2:05 p.m. COVID-19 Situational Update – Director Jennifer Johnson

Public Health Director Jennifer Johnson noted that many Population Health Trust Board Members had joined the remote meeting. She thanked them for their work and contributions to the Board of Health.

Ms. Johnson reviewed COVID-19 case statistics and said that the number of COVID-19 cases in the community had decreased, but risky events were still occurring. She discussed the importance of wearing masks, washing hands, keeping physical distance from others, and keeping gatherings small and outside.

Ms. Johnson updated the Board on outreach efforts to eligible tiers in the vaccination schedule, conversations that were being held with schools on the CDC's reopening recommendations, and that Skagit County was now in Phase 3 of the reopening plan which was no longer being decided regionally. Phases were being considered county-by-county once again.

Ms. Johnson expressed appreciation to many people and entities for the successful operation of the test site which started at Skagit Valley College and had later been moved to the Fairgrounds. Testing had been provided for nearly one year and since the demand for testing was down now that it was available through pharmacies, etc., Ms. Johnson reported that site operations were being updated to focus on the provision of vaccinations.

Vaccination statistics were discussed and 53,381 doses had been administered to date. Ms. Johnson introduced Communicable Disease Manager Polly Dubbel to provide an update on vaccination work in Skagit County.

c) 2:10 p.m. Vaccination Update – Communicable Disease Manager Polly Dubbel

Ms. Dubbel discussed vaccination efforts in Skagit County and said that approximately 27% of residents had received their first vaccination dose. (The state average was currently 24%.) Vaccines were being administered at many locations including the Skagit County Fairgrounds, local doctor's offices, pharmacies, clinics, mobile sites, etc. For useful information about COVID-19 in the State of Washington she suggested this website: www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/DataDashboard

The vaccine allocation process was reviewed. Ms. Dubbel explained that the Governor worked with the Washington State Department of Health to determine who was eligible to be vaccinated in each phase and tier. Skagit County was offering a scheduling option online that could be filled out in English or in Spanish, and, for those without internet connectivity, call-takers were available to either schedule appointments or refer callers to other locations where vaccines were being administered. Skagit County's Vaccine Hotline: 360-416-1500 or www.skagitcounty.net/covidvaccine Another tool was the Washington State vaccine locator <https://vaccinelocator.doh.wa.gov/> or state vaccine hotline 1-800-525-0127.

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Currently there were three vaccines approved to be provided in the United States: Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson Janssen. Pfizer and Moderna used messenger RNA to produce an immune response and required two doses. Johnson & Johnson Janssen used inert COVID-19 virus to produce an immune response and required one dose.

Ms. Dubbel discussed how the Skagit County vaccine site was currently operating and that the entrance had been moved to the north side of the property at 1410 Virginia Street in Mount Vernon.

d) [2:20 p.m. Health Officer Situation Update – Health Officer Dr. Howard Leibrand](#)

Health Officer Dr. Leibrand discussed the COVID-19 infection rate in Skagit County: around 132 infections per 100,000 and that 5-10% of those cases were caused by the U.K. variant. There had been 2-3 small outbreaks of the variant and the strain was becoming more predominate. It was 1 1/2 - 2 times more contagious.

Dr. Leibrand shared concerns about a fourth wave. Reminders were shared about being careful, keeping distance, wearing a mask, and getting vaccinated. He said if infections continued to increase and hospitals began to fill with COVID-19 patients, Skagit County would probably down-grade to Phase 2.

e) [2:30 p.m. 2020 COVID-19 Response: A Year in Review – Epidemiologist Lea Hamner](#)

Communicable Disease and Epidemiology Lead Lea Hamner reviewed a variety of COVID-19 data, graphs, and statistics from 2020 that had been analyzed showing infection rates; the epidemiologic curve that had three waves in 2020; cases, hospitalizations and deaths by age; case rates by city of residence; case rates by race and ethnicity; COVID response, investigation and contact tracing rates; and test site results.

The largest wave of diagnosed cases occurred right after Halloween. Overall in Skagit County there were 3,399 diagnosed cases reported, 197 hospitalizations, and 54 deaths. Mount Vernon and Burlington had the highest number of cases (Mount Vernon and Sedro-Woolley had the largest populations).

Dataset reporting was discussed and the meaningful impact of seeing information in graph-form.

f) [2:45 p.m. Board of Health Discussion](#)

Discussion was held and questions were asked regarding data from other providers in Skagit County who performed COVID-19 tests, if data was available regarding the types of occupations of residents who had tested positive for COVID-19, contact tracing and the percentage of additional positive cases, unreported positive cases, the importance of partnerships with providers and a strong Emergency Preparedness Program, the importance of updating behaviors and best practices when new information about spread and containment is released, and the strong Public Health system in place in Skagit County.

The PowerPoint presentation provided to the Board of Health can be found here:

<ftp://ftp.skagitcounty.net/countycommissioners/documents/agendapackets/03222021/>

III. [ADJOURNMENT:](#)

Chair Browning adjourned the proceedings at 3:04 p.m.

*Note, to obtain an audio or video recording of this meeting; please contact the Skagit County Commissioners' office.

**BOARD OF HEALTH
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

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Connie Davis, MD

Aaron Katz, CPH

Ron Wesen, Commissioner

ATTEST:

Peter Browning, Chair

Clerk of the Board

Lisa Janicki, Commissioner