

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

Date: May 25, 2021

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The Skagit County Board of Health met in regular session on Tuesday, May 25, 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 Connie Davis, MD to approve the minutes for Tuesday, April 27, 2021. Aaron Katz, CPH seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

1. Record of the Proceedings for Tuesday, April 27, 2021 (**Approved**)

b) [2:05 p.m. COVID-19 Situational Update - Director Jennifer Johnson](#)

Public Health Director Jennifer Johnson reviewed COVID-19 case statistics. The 4<sup>th</sup> wave of infections was receding, however, cases in some neighboring counties were continuing to trend high and the virus was continuing to spread in households.

Skagit County vaccination statistics were reviewed. 58% of all eligible individuals age 16+ had received their first vaccine. 48% of all eligible individuals age 16+ had received both vaccine doses. Ms. Johnson reported that vaccine supply was meeting the current demand and doses could now be ordered in smaller quantities and also refrigerated longer before use.

The vaccination site located at the Skagit County Fairgrounds would continue to operate until June 26, 2021 when Public Health would shift to the provision of vaccines throughout the county at mobile, pop-up sites. These mobile, pop-up sites would be located where residents were gathering at local events, churches, and farmers markets. As of May 20, 2021, the site at the fairgrounds had administered 27,992 vaccines. Local hospitals were also reducing their vaccination efforts since they were readily available at convenient locations such as local pharmacies and primary care providers.

Ms. Johnson provided information about COVID-19 breakthrough cases in twenty-one Skagit County residents who had been vaccinated. Virus side effects experienced by these individuals has been minimal and none died or had been hospitalized.

Work to address vaccine hesitancy was discussed, supporting the re-opening of schools was discussed, and new guidelines were reviewed with the Board of Health for fully vaccinated individuals. Statewide reopening, currently scheduled for June 30, 2021, would lift a vast majority of restrictions.

The Board of Health discussed the importance of clear communication about changes to the guidelines for mask wearing, gatherings, travel, etc., and, how many beds were occupied by COVID patients in the hospitals. Ms. Johnson estimated 1 patient at Island Hospital in Anacortes, 8 at Peace Health in Bellingham, and 6 at Skagit Valley Hospital with 2 that were incubated in Mount Vernon.

c) 2:15 p.m. Health Officer Situational Update - Health Officer Dr. Howard Leibrand

Dr. Leibrand was not available to provide an update and had asked Ms. Johnson to share the message that hospitals were at or near capacity serving other medical needs in the community and that if a COVID surge occurred, capacity was lacking. Also, summer was near and residents were encouraged to play safely and modify how gatherings were hosted: maintain distance, mask if necessary, and/or hold gatherings outdoors.

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- d) [2:25 p.m. Board Discussion and Possible Action: Resolution Calling for Public Hearing to Adopt Revisions to Public Health Department Schedule of Charges - Environmental Health Manager Britt Pfaff-Dunton](#)

Environmental Health Manager Britt Pfaff-Dunton provided an overview of the proposed changes to the schedule of charges for drinking water quality and quantity review fees that could be found in Skagit County Code 12.48. It was being proposed to shift the review and fees back to Public Health from Planning and Development Services.

Discussion was held regarding the proposed fees would remain slightly less or equal to what was currently being charged.

A motion was made by Commissioner Janicki to approve the Resolution calling for a public hearing to adopt revisions to the Skagit County Public Health Department Schedule of Charges. **(Resolution No. R20210097)** Commissioner Wesen seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

- e) [2:40 p.m. Public Health 2021 Operational Dashboard - Director Jennifer Johnson](#)

Ms. Johnson provided an overview of the proposed 2021 work plan for the Public Health Department which was aligned with, and incorporated in, priorities from the Community Health Assessment (CHA) and also driven by the strategic plan.

The two focus areas for the Health Department in the 2021 plan, and on-going, included equity as a guiding principal, and communications to promote health and increased understanding and support for public health issues in the community. Ms. Johnson reported that Public Health now had a dedicated Communications position and a team working to increase literature, outreach, and online interactions in Spanish as well.

Ms. Johnson reviewed the main elements of the work plan:

1. COVID-19 Response which included the administration of vaccines, confirmed cases contacted and counseled, contacts made to employers and schools to prevent outbreaks, care and food packages delivered to people in isolation, the provision of hotel rooms for individuals needing to quarantine, and messaging and communicating to the public.
2. Emergency Preparedness was highlighted by the pandemic and would be prioritized and expanded. Also, Ms. Johnson said that Public Health wished to redevelop the County Medical Reserves Corps (MRC).
3. Environmental Health which included water review of quality and quantity that would be coming back to public health and streamlined and other areas of focus including permitting on-site septic systems and system maintenance and repair, investigating garbage accumulation or illegal dumping, assuring food safety at retail food establishments, and updating Skagit County Code 12.48 including the fee schedules.
4. Housing and Behavioral Health. Work included partnering with cities for the provision of a year-round shelter (and Mayor Sexton has been leading the effort in partnership with Friendship House). Service and support to school districts would be expanded, treatment services for individuals in the Community Justice Center and their transition to the community with support services would be expanded, Medication Assisted Treatment to East County started through the Lifeline program, and the behavioral health law enforcement co-responder models would be augmented.
5. Communicable Disease which included investigating state notifiable conditions, providing therapy for tuberculosis cases, case treatment for individuals with STDs, chronic disease programming development, mobile clinics to high-risk communities with the incorporation of the needle exchange program would be expanded, and community partnerships maintained and developed.
6. Assessment and Planning which included completing the Community Health Assessment (CHA), developing a COVID-19 recovery plan based on needs identified through the CHA, and increased access to services for younger individuals experiencing developmental disabilities.

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7. Child and Family Health to collaborate with partners to build the Help Me Grow Skagit System which was the result of The First 1,000 Days work through Population Health Trust, continued provision of the Nurse Family Partnership to eligible families for child development and school readiness, and continuing to connect families with dentists.
8. Senior Services which included continuing to provide the Meals on Wheels program, to safely re-open senior centers, and increase messaging and education for well-being and connectivity.

Ms. Johnson said that funds recently received from the American Rescue Plan Act would help with many Public Health efforts and support ongoing pandemic response and key community health needs such as the redevelopment of the MRC, expanding Emergency Preparedness planning, serving schools and shelters, providing outreach to seniors, and funding for the family resource center.

Last, Ms. Johnson showed the Data Dashboard to the Board which can be found at [www.skagitcounty.net/departments/health](http://www.skagitcounty.net/departments/health) It highlighted operational metrics of what the department has accomplished and what they are doing to fulfill their mission.

f) [2:50 p.m. Board of Health Discussion](#)

Ms. Johnson asked for discussion on the 2021 work plan and what were the highest priorities of the Board of Health, and, did the dashboard provide useful information about the Health Departments operations and services or was anything missing?

The Board provided feedback on the dashboard and asked for the inclusion of additional information and trend lines. Ms. Johnson agreed that the Board was asking for useful community-wide information, and some of it could be overlaid with the dashboard. However, the purpose of the dashboard was to provide a snapshot of operational Public Health Department statistics that Dr. Davis had requested at the last Board of Health retreat in the fall since the Board of Health provided oversight to Public Health operations.

A discussion on data-sets followed and the potential, eventual, compilation of community-wide data. Public Health Analyst Kristen Ekstran provided information about a dashboard the Population Health Trust built in 2015 that had been growing and could be useful to the Board.

Chair Browning thanked Ms. Johnson for providing information about the Health Department's operations.

The PowerPoint presentation and a memo provided to the Board of Health can be found here: <ftp://ftp.skagitcounty.net/countycommissioners/documents/agendapackets/05242021/>

III. [ADJOURNMENT:](#)

Chair Browning adjourned the proceedings at 3:13 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

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Aaron Katz, CPH

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Ron Wesen, Commissioner

ATTEST:

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Peter Browning, Chair

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Clerk of the Board

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Lisa Janicki, Commissioner