

DATE: January 19, 2021

2:00 p.m. - Convened/Board of Health.

Present: Chris Skidmore (2:00 p.m.).

Remotely: Ellary Holliday, Scott Leadingham, Jacob Jones and Chelsea Cannard (2:00 p.m.).

DIVISION UPDATES:

Minutes:

1. Commissioner Largent **moved** Commissioner Handy **seconded** the motion and it **carried** to approve the Board of Health minutes of November 16, 2020.

Health Officer Update:

2. Chris Skidmore reported Whitman County is holding steady at 10-20 positive COVID-19 cases per day. Whitman County has not seen a spike due to the holidays at this time, but with college students returning, we still could in the next week or two.

Recommendations for schools remain in effect as they are still considered high risk. In the regional report, Whitman County has met three of the four matrix. We will remain in phase one for at least another week. Friday a new report will become available. Pullman Regional Hospital was able to provide "arrival" testing for teachers after the holidays. Teachers have moved to the 1B group for vaccinations.

Whitman County hospitals are not strained and are doing well. Diversion to other places such as Spokane, however, are somewhat limited. Long term care facilities remain the biggest concern. The department continues to work with DSHS and facilities with outbreaks.

The first dose of vaccine has been administered to all residents and staff.

Vaccine clinics are up and running smoothly. 650 doses were administered in a single day. They are working toward scaling it up to 1,500 doses per day. Clinics need a significant amount of space due to wait time after administering the vaccine to see how patients react. Vaccine availability remains on a week to week basis. It is hard to project making planning a challenge. There are five total providers enrolled and more are looking to get on board. These providers are Pullman Regional Hospital, Sid's Pharmacy, Schweitzer Engineering, Whitman County Hospital, and Palouse Medical. Overall, the county has received 6,000 doses administering to approximately 80% who qualify. Mr. Skidmore reported the county should be at 100% by the weekend.

Approximately 96% of CARES funding was used in COVID response. Funds were also used for the vaccine roll-out for 1A group. Mr. Skidmore stated they will wait on funding to see what next year will look like. He would like to set up mass vaccination clinics. He would also like to use some of the funds for quarantine isolation. He is looking at getting a vaccine coordinator hired for short term as well as a front office clerk position. He introduced Chelsea Cannard as the new Environmental Health intern.

Environmental Health Update:

3. Chelsea Cannard started on January 1st. Due to COVID-19 response, environmental health issues have been limited. Restaurants are still opening. She stated they are sending out emails to keep business owners updated as much as possible. Looking forward, some problems to be aware of are the backlog of permits allowing restaurants to open. With the infection rate, there are time constraints. The department is considering allowing restaurants to do self-inspections. They would take photos and send them to the Public Health Department. Director, Chris Skidmore, said he would like to hire an Environmental Health technician in the near future.

Administrative Update:

4. There was no additional report.

HIPAA Update:

5. There was no HIPAA update at this time.

Next Meeting/Adjournment:

6. The next Board of Health meeting is March 15, 2021.
The Board adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

7. **Future Meetings:**

May 17, 2021
July 19, 2021
September 20, 2021
November 15, 2021

Maribeth Becker, CMC
Clerk of the Board
BY: Connie Ellis
Deputy Clerk of the Board

Arthur D. Swannack, CHAIRMAN
Board of Health