

Monday, March 20, 2023

Attendees:

Commissioner Largent, Chairman, Commissioner Handy, Commissioner Swannack, Craig VanTine, Community Stakeholder, Kara Bates, representing Public Health, Health Care Facilities and Providers, Chris Skidmore, Corrine McMichael, Dr. Brad Bowman

3:00 PM - Convene/Board of Health

1. Approval of Minutes
2. Health Officer Update from Health Department Director, Chris Skidmore
 - Whitman County 7-day case rate in Whitman County is currently at 18 cases per 100k. This is down slightly since our last board of health and quite a bit better than the statewide average. With students returning from Spring Break activities, with a possible uptick in cases over the next couple of weeks.
 - April 3rd the Secretary of Health's universal mask order for healthcare, long term care, and correctional facilities is set to expire. The Washington State Department of Health will continue to recommend masking in these settings moving forward.
 - May 11th the federal emergency declarations will end. The federal government will decrease their role in purchasing COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines for states. Currently the Health Department has access to free testing resources and ample amounts of PPE to share with facilities that are undergoing outbreaks.
 - RSV and Influenza cases continue to see a downward trend. Activity really started to drop in late January and has since stabilized.
 - The timeline for Covid boosters has not been established however Chris feels it will be like the flu shot and be available as such soon.
3. Community Health Update
 - At the beginning of March, another Community Health Educator to assist our nurse with case investigations and data entry into state databases was added to staff.
 - Corrin McMichael, Deputy Director and Meghan Johns are going to Spokane, WA for the Northwest Rural Health Association to present work on Community Health Needs Assessment. That work continues to get attention. Later this year, one of our consultants from WSU will be presenting a poster at a National Conference in San Diego around our work on the Community Health Needs Assessment.
 - Our Palouse Resource Guide continues to get refined and streamlined. In January organizations were given access to their information and were allowed to update and make edits. Feedback and analytics are being used to track use of the resource guide and how to be better informed for the changes.
 - Washington State University Residency Program (Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine), CHAS Health, and Whitman County Public Health are partnering in the Fall of 2023 to offer local, on-site Health Fairs to rural Whitman County school districts. The fairs will provide access to sports physicals and well child appointments to help get children ready for the start of school. Agreements have been made St. John, Endicott, Colfax, Lacrosse, and Colton. Shout out to Corrin for engaging with our schools and getting them on board! The fairs will be held in August before the start of school.
 - Car seat trainings will be hosted in the first week of May. These trainings will certify installation and fitting of children's car seats.
 - Hoping to offer free life jackets this year at Whitman County boat launches along the Snake River and Rock Lake. A retired gentleman in Endicott has offered to build the racks to hold the jackets.

- The clinic continues to see good numbers, several requests for Adult Vaccines have been received however not covered through the clinics available funding streams. Some of these vaccine series can be extremely expensive to those without insurance. The Health Department is planning to apply for a grant through Lewis and Clark Valley Healthcare Foundation to help cover those costs.
- The WIC program experience a bit of a setback about a month ago with the loss of the front office receptionist in Pullman. Interviews for that position are taking place this week. The new Community Health Educator, Katie Drymon is nearly completely trained up and has started serving clients. Katie spent a day shadowing WIC staff at Spokane Regional Health District which was a good opportunity to train and get questions answered from experienced staff.
- Later this year, the hope is to expand awareness of our Safe Kids and WIC programs by attending some of the rural community events and having a table with information and resources.

4. Environmental Health Update

- The move to digital has been fairly seem-less and most are using the new electronic forms without difficulties. Paper applications are still able and being processed.
- During the colder months, staff performs food inspections at local restaurants and schools. In the nicer weather, staff will start getting pulled into the field for onsite septic work.
- Currently the Health Department is going through the procurement process to replace the work truck with some of our remaining FPHS funding.
- Environmental Health is still scheduled to move into the Whitcom building as soon as internet and phones are established.

5. Administrative Update

- Interviews for the front desk position in our Pullman office this week and hope to have someone added soon.
- Plan is to advertise for another nurse to assist with clinical services in both our Pullman and Colfax offices in either April or May. The position would be part-time and they would be working closely with our nurse, Jamie Peters and childcares in relation to the MCH and CHYSCN programs.
- Hopes are to advertise for another EH position in the upcoming months once the move to the Whitcom building is complete. The EH position would be assisting with various environmental health programs.

4. HIPAA Update

- Nothing to report.

5. Adjourned at 3:35 PM.

2023 Meetings

July 17, 2023

September 18, 2023

November 20, 2023