



**PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, December 14, 2022**

THIS MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BY REMOTE PARTICIPATION.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Christina Wagar, Nancy Churchill, Cheri Petersen, Kamori Cattadoris, Dr. Leslie Waters, Mary Selecky, Wes McCart, Katie Swain, Dr. Artzis, Dr. Caleb Holtzer

MEMBERS ABSENT: Debra Wulff

NETCHD STAFF PRESENT: Jeanie Beegle, Sonja Moore, Jon Ness, Matt Schanz, Molly Corvino

CALL MEETING TO ORDER: Christina Wagar called the meeting to order at 8:02 am.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 9, 2022: Kamori Cattadoris moved, and Leslie Waters seconded the motion to approve the minutes of November 9, 2022. Motion carried.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

PHAB VACANCY UPDATE: Debra Wulff was appointed to the PHAB vacancy representing Ferry County at the recent Board of Health meeting on November 9, 2022. Debra is the Executive Director of the Lake Roosevelt Clinic in Ferry County. While she has accepted the position to represent Ferry County, she will not be representing on behalf of the Colville Confederated Tribe.

Matt commented that Caleb Holtzer has volunteered to step back from the PHAB to allow another applicant to move forward. The Board of Health will review the remaining applicants and make a determination at the January 18, 2023 meeting.

NETCHD STRATEGIC PLAN & STATUS: Matt stated the plan will be slightly scaled back and modified following comments from the PHAB and the Board of Health. NETCHD continues to meet with VillageReach who has assisted NETCHD in the creation of the strategic plan. He commented on the GANTT chart and stated that there will be another meeting with VillageReach today, December 14, 2022 to work on the prioritization throughout the plan. A new draft will be available in January, and will be presented for potential approval at the January 18, 2023 Board of Health meeting.

CHNA REVIEW: Sonja Moore stated Stevens County and Pend Oreille County have concluded focus groups. Following the completion of all three counties, NETCHD will partner with Spokane Regional Health District to begin the analysis portion of this process. She said the goal is to have the CHNA completed mid to late January. Once completed, work will begin on the improvement plan; NETCHD will utilize the PHAB and each county's health care. She said addressing some of the identified issues such as mental health, transportation, and housing are outside of NETCHD's scope. However, NETCHD will work

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with other community partners to address these issues.

Mary Selecky stated that TEDD could assist in areas that overlap/align with work that they do.

Christina Wagar asked what items were identified during the previous CHNA and what steps were taken towards addressing those items. She asked if NETCHD will have report on the outcomes following the current CHNA as well.

Matt said maternal smoking rates was one of the areas identified in the last CHNA in Stevens and Ferry County. While NETCHD received funding to create a program around addressing this concern, COVID-19 hit and NETCHD shifted the funds into childcare planning with Rural Resources instead. Pend Oreille County identified youth mental health as their main area of concern, implementing solutions such as counseling rooms within libraries, improving broadband access to reach youth remotely, and more.

DOMESTIC ANIMAL WASTE POLICY: A draft policy was shared with PHAB members prior to the meeting. In the past, foodborne illnesses predominantly originated with meat. Currently, foodborne illnesses are more commonly associated with produce and drinking water. This trend has brought to light issues with proper disposal and storage of animal waste. He said the plan emphasizes education first, then referrals, and lastly enforcement. NETCHD wants to work with individuals who are actively making steps to come into compliance. Following education and a referral to the conservation district, if individuals are not taking steps to come into compliance, NETCHD would move to the next step of enforcement. Since the conservation district is a nonregulatory entity, NETCHD will work with the prosecuting attorneys within each county to resolve serious public health threats. The Health Officer, Dr. Artzis, is willing to meet one on one with individuals prior to the escalation of enforcement and involving the prosecutor's office.

Christina said it would be helpful to state what a threat to public health would entail, and why the WAC exists in the policy.

Cheri said she appreciates the work with the conservation districts; she feels that it should be clarified/defined within the policy that the conservation district cannot make the first contact and is nonregulatory entity.

Nancy said it seems there is a lot of cooperation and flexibility built into the policy. She said this may need to be outwardly stated in the policy, that NETCHD will work with people to resolve the issues for the benefit of the community.

Dr. Artzis said if they are deliberately and egregiously offending, he doesn't want a statement like that to be held against NETCHD.

Nancy referenced the "Code of the West" in regards to neighborhood disputes.

Matt said there are situations where these types of offenses become intentional; there was a situation where a neighbor piled animal waste all around the border lining another person's property in order to

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force them out of their home.

Nancy asked if NETCHD has considered helping people who are struggling financially or that have health issues and cannot come into compliance. She asked what is in place to help these individuals?

Jon said there are no resources available through NETCHD; individuals could reach out to their church/community organizations for help. Jon said he has also taken it upon himself and reached out to churches and community resources in some cases. In addition, the conservation district may have grants available to ranchers who are making improvements to land and/or improve impacts to water quality.

Cheri Petersen said Rural Resources offers grants and assistance for individuals who have disabilities or individuals with barriers.

Matt said NETCHD has made referrals to Northwest Justice Project since some of these situations become civil disputes. They are a resource for people who need legal assistance and can't afford it.

Christina asked if this will be brought back to the PHAB following any changes prior to final approval.

Jon Ness stated the feedback will be incorporated into the policy and the final draft will be presented to the Board of Health on January 18, 2023.

FLU, COVID-19, RSV UPDATE: Molly Corvino stated there has been a significant rise in influenza A, particularly in children aged 2-3 years old. In addition, there is a Tamiflu shortage; however, NETCHD has received approval to order from the national stockpile. In addition, there have also been increased reports of RSV, flu, and COVID-19 within our counties. Absentee rates at local schools are hovering around 20-25%, with the highest absenteeism rate at 40%. There have been no influenza or RSV outbreaks at this time.

Caleb Holtzer said Providence clinics are experiencing high rates of flu, and multiple cases of influenza A per day. Vaccination rates for flu are also down this year.

Christina said Newport Hospital and Health Services (NHHS) emergency department has had difficulty transferring patients to Spokane when there is limited space. NHHS has experienced high levels of flu and staff illness, as well as lingering staff shortages.

Matt said the DOH has a data dashboard that shows the current trends in variants and COVID-19 rates. Wastewater samplings show a more detailed report on variants and rates as well.

Dr Artzis said with the scarcity of beds for outpatient/inpatient, he cannot get patients in to have critical procedures. He said it is frustrating that for the past three years, all levels of hospital staff including nurses, housekeeping, lab techs, etc. have worked themselves into the ground dealing with surge after surge to meet the need in their community, only to be met with apathy and contention. He said if there is anything that we can do proactively to take the strain off our medical system, we should be doing it.

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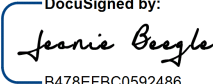
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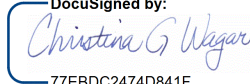
Instead of acting once the crisis has already escalated, we should be taking proactive steps to prevent this from happening again. He said it is heartbreaking to see that this is not a priority right now for our communities, and we will be in the same predicament months from now if lessons are not learned and actions not taken.

Matt echoed this saying that NETCHD is monitoring COVID-19 hospitalizations, case rates, and bed capacity. Stevens County moved from "Low" to "Medium" last week according to the CDC Community Levels. Our counties are likely to move into "High" risk level over the holidays due to limited bed capacity and rising case rates.

Debra Wulff joined the meeting shortly before 9:00AM and was welcomed to the PHAB.

ADJOURNMENT: Christina Wagar adjourned the meeting at 9:01 am. The next meeting of the Public Health Advisory Board of Northeast Tri County Health District will be on January 11, 2023 by remote participation.

By  _____
Jeanie Beegle
Administration Office Manager

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Christina Wagar
Public Health Advisory Board Chair