

Discussion for the 2024 Recommendations Report

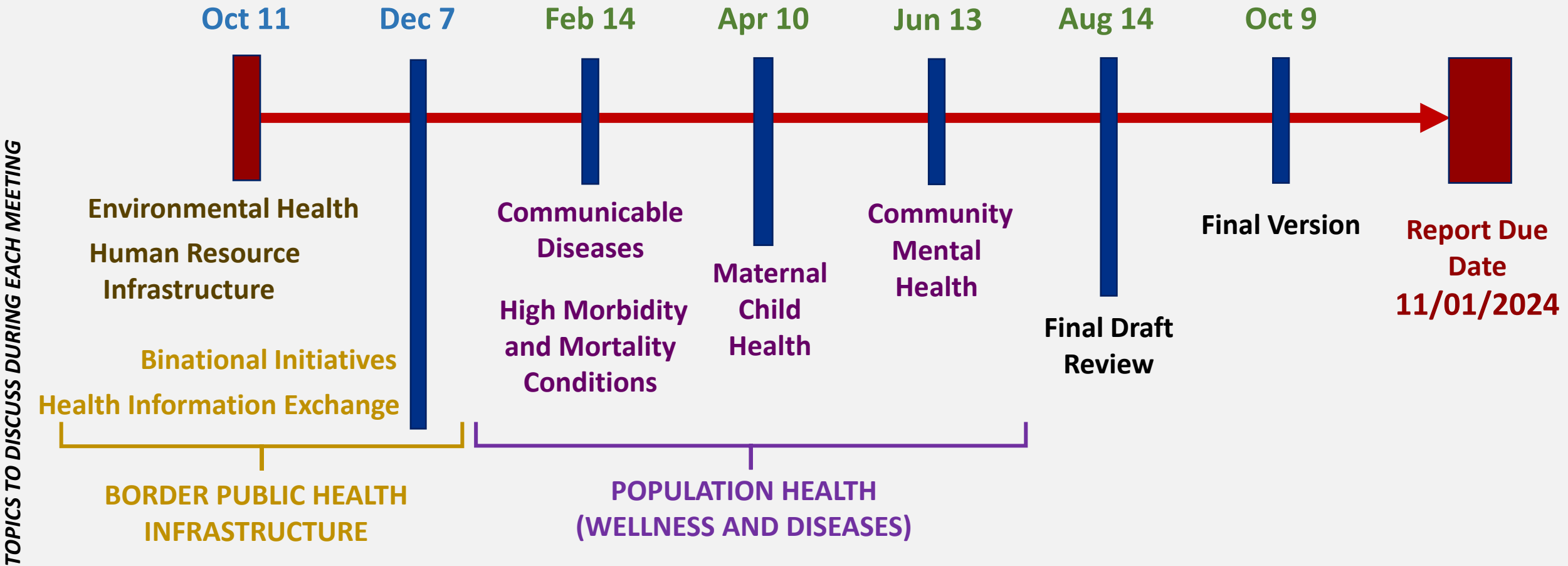
Environmental Health

Human Resource Infrastructure

Task Force of Border Health Officials Meeting
October 11, 2023

2023-2024 Report Timeline Overview

Scheduled Meetings 2023-2024



Recommendations Discussion Guidelines

- Members may take turns leading the discussion for each topic
- The recommendations must be differentiated between **long-term** and **short-term** per legislative mandate:
 - [HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE CHAPTER 120. TASK FORCE OF BORDER HEALTH OFFICIALS \(texas.gov\)](#)
- The discussion will be based on the proposed recommendations submitted by Members before each meeting
 - New recommendations may be generated during the meeting because of the discussion
- All Members should participate in the discussions
- OBPH support staff will modify the proposed recommendations according to the discussion during the meeting
- The Chair may select Members to meet as a subcommittee to conduct additional work on proposed recommendations that are not resolved during the meeting
- The recommendations may be discussed and modified by Members until the August 14 final draft review deadline

Environmental Health

Short-term Recommendation

1. Enhanced Vector-Borne Disease Mitigation Due to Mass Migration

- a. In light of mass migration and the movement of tens of thousands of migrants through our region, bringing diseases such as malaria and yellow fever that can be introduced into our local mosquito populations and subsequently affect our human population, we must implement a **targeted vector control program** in collaboration with Mexico.
- b. This program should encompass rigorous mosquito control measures, including surveillance, larval source reduction, and public education campaigns, with a specific focus on areas with higher migrant movement.
- c. Collaborate closely with local health agencies and community organizations, binationally, to ensure the effective implementation of these measures. This goal is imperative to protect the health of our border communities by proactively addressing the immediate vector-borne disease threats associated with mass migration.



Environmental Health Long-term Recommendations

- 1. Establish an Environmental Health Minor curriculum**
 - including a Professional Registered Sanitarian licensing exam with universities and colleges in Texas.
- 2. Establish a comprehensive and continuous air quality monitoring system along the Texas-Mexico border**
 - to assess and mitigate the impact of all six major air pollutants, with a focus on PM2.5 emissions from heavy-duty vehicles and industrial sources.



Environmental Health

Additional Recommendations Topics 1

- **Water Quality**
 - Water concern issues due to drought
 - More people using well-water
 - Risk for waterborne illnesses
- **Illegal Dumping**
 - Hazardous waste
 - Runoff into nearby water/irrigation
- **Restaurant Cooling Systems**
 - Air conditioning requirements in cooking areas for minimum square footage to
 - Ensure adequate cooling
 - Cooking, heat, and sweat from workers can grow bacteria
- **Cottage Laws**
 - Education
 - Cheeses, meat and other food allowed to be transported over from Mexico
 - 50lbs per person limit
- **TCEQ Engagement and Enforcement/MUDS (Municipal Utility District)**
 - Regulation
- **Drought – Water Supply Shortage**
 - Well water Testing and Access to testing
 - Water Districts prioritizing Municipal Water systems

Environmental Health

Additional Recommendations Topics 2

- **Tuberculosis**
 - Air quality
 - Filtration systems
 - Ventilation
- **Non-canine Rabies**
 - Education
 - Bats, skunks, raccoons, monkeys
 - Petting zoo/petting farm
- **Registered Sanitarian Jr./Lite**
 - Wouldn't require a college degree
 - Allow people with years of experience to become certified
 - Ease the burden of RS shortage
- **Public Health Clinical Staffing and Training**
 - Bilingual / Bi-Cultural
 - Increase in grant funding
 - Allowances truly represented by Population
 - Non-direct CDC-funded areas.

Human Resource Infrastructure

Short-term Recommendations

- 1. Promote and get more medical volunteers for Operation Border Health Preparedness.**
- 2. Establish that Medical Residents have some time allocated through a health department.**
- 3. Increase access to healthcare services for underserved communities along the border.**
 - This may involve mobile clinics, telemedicine, or partnerships with nonprofit organizations to provide medical care to vulnerable populations.
 - Increase funding for primary and behavioral public health services staff.



Human Resource Infrastructure Long-term Recommendations

- 1. Establish a border health-specific curriculum for CMEs for providers.**
- 2. Eliminating Medical Underserved Designations.**
 - Advocate for legislation and funding to cultivate local healthcare talent.
 - Support the expansion of residency programs
 - Develop community health and look-a-like centers.
 - Integrate telemedicine as a permanent healthcare component.
 - Invest in healthcare infrastructure to enhance healthcare access and eliminate medically underserved designations.
 - Ensure sustainable, locally grown healthcare solutions along the Texas-Mexico border.



Thank you!

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Office of
Border
Public Health