Public Health Funding and Policy Committee Meeting

June 7, 2023

Minutes

Committee Members Attending

Stephen Williams, MEd, MPA - Houston Health Department – Chair

Phillip Huang, MD, MPH – Dallas County Health and Human Services – Vice Chair

Emilie Prot, DO, MPH – DSHS, Public Health Region 11

Jennifer Griffith, DrPH, MPH – Texas A&M University

Julie St. John, DrPH – Texas Tech University

Lisa Dick, Brownwood-Brown County Health Department

Sharon Melville, MD, MPH – DSHS, Public Health Region 7

Sharon Whitley – Hardin County Health Department

Todd Bell, MD – City of Amarillo Health Department

Attendees:

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| Aelia Ahktar | Jessica R Hyde | Nicole Knight |
| Amanda Ortez | Joanna Seyller | Noah A Chornyak |
| Ann Jacobo | John Villarreal | Rachel E Sonne |
| Angel Angco-Barrera | Katherine Layman | Fauzia Khan |
| Becky Earlie Royer | Kathryn Kaminsky | Ricky Garcia |
| Brenda Narro | Karla Bautista | Robert Kirkpatrick |
| Carlos Plasencia | Karnes Cliffton | Roberto Beaty |
| Carrie Bradford | Lacey Camp | Rocio Rodriguez |
| Christine Riley | Laura LaFuente | Sarah Hollister |
| Cristina Garcia | Lesley Brannan | Saroj Rai |
| Colin Crocker | Lillian Ringsdorf | Molly Fudell |
| Crystal Biggs | Lindsay Lanagan | Scott Milton |
| Dana Birnberg | Lisa Steffek | Sharonica White |
| David Gruber | Lucille Palenapa | Stephen Pont |
| Denise Grogan | Megan Wolfe | Steve Eichner |
| Desmar Walkes | Micheal DeLeon | Timothy Patterson |
| Emily Rocha | Mohib Nawab | Tom Valentine |
| Glenna Laughlin | Molly Fudell | Veronica Karam |
| Imelda Garcia | Monica Gamez | Yolanda S Cantu |
| Jennifer Smith | Moriah Hernandez | Walquiria Sanchez |
| Jennifer Shuford | Nicholas Ours |  |

Chair, Mr. Stephen Williams, called the meeting to order at 9:00 am and the committee members introduced themselves.

**April 12th Meeting Minutes**

Ms. Lisa Dick motioned to approve the minutes. Todd Bell seconded. Minutes approved.

**Update on COVID-19 Vaccine Administration:**

Ms. Imelda Garcia updated the committee on COVID-19 vaccine administration with a slide presentation. The cadence of updating the COVID-19 vaccines is moving towards being similar to influenza vaccines. The World Health Organization Technical Group has recommended the inclusion of monovalent XBB.1 descendent lineage for the fall vaccination season. The Food and Drug Administration and Related Biological Products Advisory committee is scheduled to meet on June 15th to select the strain for this Fall’s COVID-19 vaccination.

Mr. Williams asked if this was going to be aligned with the fall. Ms. Garcia confirmed and added they will try to align the release with the flu vaccine.

**Update on Current Status regarding Mpox:**

Ms. Imelda Garcia updated on the status of Mpox within Texas to include information on spread, demographics, and other relevant data. A total of 2,987 cases have been documented since the first case in June of 2022. The case demographics continue to be the same as is much of the data. We know that it is still circulating, mainly within our urban metro areas. Case counts have dropped since August 2022 but there is a cluster outbreak reported in Chicago that we are keeping track of. In the DFW area some cases have been reported after attending the Purple Party on 5/6/23. There is a continued push for the JYNNEOS vaccine for prevention purposes. A reminder that JYNNEOS is a two-dose series of vaccines.

Dr. Phil Huang stated that they are trying to administer the 2nd dose of the Mpox vaccine by sending text messages and using the phone bank to reach the community and by contacting festival organizers and having them advertise about the Mpox vaccine during their events.

**Update on Public Health Information Systems and Interoperability with Local Health Entities:**

Mr. Steve Eichner presented an update regarding technology and interoperability. Work is ongoing on the United States Core Data for Interoperability Standards, forming a core foundation for information exchange. DSHS is continuing to work on developing and releasing electronic case reporting. We are not yet ready for receiving data, but we are currently onboarding healthcare providers. Also, at the federal level, the development of the Trusted Exchange Framework and common agreement continues. This is the latest approach for nationwide exchange of health information, including support for public health. There were several bills presented in this legislative session that may impact public health technology. More information will be provided in future meetings.

**Update on DSHS’ COVID-19 Health Disparities Grant Funded Activities:**

Dr. Cristina Garcia gave an update on the Health Disparities Grant. Fifty local and state partners are currently funded and are engaging targeted communities with health disparities to understand needs and priorities. No cost extension amendments are in process, and we continue to work with DSHS Contract Management Section. The current fellowship cohort will complete the fellowship program in May of 2023. All contract amendments for the no cost extension have been executed and half of the updated work plans have been approved. Dr. Garcia shared various successes of the grant within the state.

**Update on the Public Health Provider Type– Senate Bill 73:**

Ms. Sharonica White provided the committee with a brief overview of the Public Health Provider Type – Senate Bill 73 from the 87th Legislative Session (Regular). As of December 2022, a separate provider type was made available for Medicaid allowing the enrollment of local health departments,. As of April 2023, local health department providers were also added as a payable provider type to Medicaid eligible procedure codes.

**Update on the 88th Legislative session – Impact on Public Health:**

Mr. Zach Flores, a member of the Government Affairs Team for the Department of State Health Services, provided the committee with an overview of the recent 88th Legislative Session and its impact on public health. House Bill 1575 added new training components for community health workers was signed into law and will become effective on September 1, 2023. Senate Bill 29 which prohibits a governmental entity from taking actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and will become effective on September 1, 2023. House Bill 624 allows a firefighter to transport a patient in a vehicle other than an EMS vehicle to a health care facility and will be effective on September 1, 2023. Other bills were passed by the house but are still awaiting signature from the Governor.

Mr. Williams asked if there were any bills passed about the Cottage Food Law. Mr. Flores stated that there was nothing presented, and nothing passed.

**Annual Report:**

Mr. Williams stated that an annual report will need to be compiled and filed. A question was asked to the committee if a new process was needed. Mr. Todd Bell stated that using the same process to create the report seems reasonable.

**Public Comment:**

No public comment at this time.

**Timelines, Next steps, Announcements, and Future Meeting Dates:**

The next meeting date is scheduled for August 9th, 2023. Future agendas will be discussed with Ms. Glenna Laughlin as Rafael Alberti has accepted a position with HHSC.

**Adjourn:**

Dr. Huang made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Jennifer Griffith seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Approved:

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Stephen L. Williams, Committee Chair Date