



## MEETING OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

March 7, 2024  
7:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.

### Hybrid Meeting

In person: Administrative Conference Room, 509 Girard Street, Bellingham, WA 98225

Public Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84408045776?pwd=Ij7LtZJbbsUMBM7ZmJ4KmmzHajRAHo.1>

Join by phone: 1 253 215 8782, Webinar ID: 844 0804 5776, Passcode: 98225

**(members and presenters: please use Zoom link in your meeting invitation)**

## A G E N D A

Meeting Topics		Presenter	
1.	Call to order. Acknowledgments. Roll call of PHAB Members. Approve minutes from January meeting. (Pages 2-12)	7:00 - 7:05	Sterling Chick
2.	Fentanyl Declaration of Emergency (Pages 13-17)	7:05 – 7:25	Barry Buchanan
3.	Homeless/Housing Coordination group (Pages 18-20)	7:25 - 7:55	Ann Beck
4.	Discuss PHAB meeting structure and sub-group options (Pages 21-23)	7:55 - 8:10	Sterling Chick
5.	Public Comment	8:10 - 8:15	Sterling Chick
6.	Health Director/Health Officer Update	8:15 - 8:25	Erika Lautenbach/Greg Thompson
7.	Final Comments/Next Steps/Adjourn	8:25 - 8:30	Sterling Chick
<p>The public is invited to email written comments on agenda items or other topics of interest to the Public Health Advisory Board at <a href="mailto:PHAB@co.whatcom.wa.us">PHAB@co.whatcom.wa.us</a>. Please put "PHAB Public Comment" in the subject line. Written comments received at least 48 hours before the meeting will be distributed to board members prior to the meeting. Oral comments from the public will be limited to topics on the agenda.</p> <p>Per RCW 42.17A.555 the use of public facilities to support or oppose candidates or ballot issues is prohibited. Members of the public and the legislative body are not allowed to speak in support of, or in opposition to, a ballot measure or individual candidacy during an open public meeting. Please refrain from raising campaign issues when addressing the Board.</p>			
<b>Adjourn</b>			

***Community members who require special assistance to participate in a committee meeting are asked to contact the meeting facilitator at least 4 business days in advance.***





# WHATCOM COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

## MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 11, 2024

- Present:** Sterling Chick (Chair), Joni Hensley, Julie Terry, Kelli Carroll, Madison Emry, Jon Scanlon, Jeffery Hart, Chris Kobdich, Emily O'Connor, Ashley Thomasson, Amy Harley for Greg Thompson, Shu-Ling Zhao, Adrienne Renz, Teri Bryant
- Absent:** Edna Revey, Vesla Tonnessen, Leah Wainman, Christine Espina, Guy Occhiogrosso, Michael Massanari, Robyn Phillips-Madson

Topic	Discussion/Outcome
<b>Call to order</b>	Sterling Chick presented a land acknowledgment. Roll call of Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) members.
<b>Approve Minutes</b>	Minutes from the meeting held on December 7, 2023 were approved.
<b>Public Comment</b>	The following people spoke: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natalie Chavez</li> </ul>
<b>Health Director/Health Officer Update</b>	<p>Amy Hockenberry, Health Information Assessment supervisor, and Jake Brandvold, epidemiologist, presented updates on drug overdose data and respiratory virus data. Slides are appended to these minutes. Data that was shared is also available online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drug overdose data – <a href="https://whatcomoverdoseprevention.org/data/">https://whatcomoverdoseprevention.org/data/</a></li> <li>Respiratory virus transmission monitoring – <a href="https://www.whatcomcounty.us/4281/Respiratory-Virus-Data-Dashboards">https://www.whatcomcounty.us/4281/Respiratory-Virus-Data-Dashboards</a>.</li> </ul> <p>Erika Lautenbach, Whatcom County Health and Community Services (WCHCS) director, welcomed new and reappointed members to PHAB. She will be contacting new members to arrange an orientation to PHAB. Regarding membership, Erika shared that PHAB has been selecting many members based on a hub and spoke model, incorporating members from other advisory boards so PHAB can act as a coordinating body for all boards and commissions staffed by WCHCS.</p> <p>To follow up on the opioid data Amy and Jake presented, Erika has an update on opioid prevention work. Last year, PHAB had a joint meeting with the Opioid Response Task Force, which helped spur some action. There is now a MAC (multi-agency coordination) group that is moving forward with some initiatives, including legislative recommendations for the County</p>

	<p>Council and the state legislature. We have just hired a new opioid position, Kari Holley, funded through a state Foundation Public Health Services grant. Every jurisdiction in Washington State received funding for a dedicated opioid position and Erika is glad to have Kari joining the department to help with this much-needed work. Erika also wanted to recognize the efforts of the All Hands Whatcom group. This is a collaborative effort with a lot of different partners. Erika shared the list of activities and events coming up that the All Hands group is sponsoring (appended to these minutes). While the overdose numbers in Jake’s presentation are hard to see, Erika wanted to buffer that with some hope and optimism that we’ve got good coordination and systems to try to address this issue and hope to see those overdose numbers come down in 2024. If members wish to, we could arrange another joint meeting with the Opioid Response Task Force this year.</p> <p>Erika also offered a report on the Severe Weather Shelter that the department is supporting this winter. The shelter is located near the traffic circle where State Street becomes Boulevard. The Severe Weather Shelter has been opening when the forecast indicates temperatures will be at or below 28 degrees, but given the unpredictability of the weather and some of the really hard rain we’ve had, the shelter has been opening in some cases when the forecasted low was only 32 degrees (and the Ferndale Severe Weather Shelter has done the same). The Severe Weather Shelter will remain open during the day over the weekend because of the extremely cold temperatures expected. There is also a winter shelter at Civic Field that the city has contracted to staff and they are only open overnight due to staffing restrictions. Basecamp is maintaining its current policy of only allowing folks who are staying the night to be there during the day. The only added capacity we have during the day for this weekend is at our Severe Weather Shelter for those who stayed the previous night. We know we have work to do to build capacity, especially around staffing issues.</p> <p>Lastly, Erika shared that last year she convened a Funder’s Roundtable group so that all of our philanthropy partners, including the city and the county, meet quarterly. That group has been talking about a joint initiative around training and support for our nonprofits, providing them (especially small nonprofit leaders) with tools that will allow them to grow capacity and retain staff.</p>
<p><b>Health Board/County Council Update</b></p>	<p>Jon Scanlon is the new Councilmember filling at large position B. Councilmember Scanlon will be the Council representative to PHAB and will be chairing the Public Works and Health Committee. He shared some of his personal and professional experiences in health care and public health. Interests include looking into health care needs and gaps in our county, bringing in more resources from the state and federal government, and rural access to care.</p> <p>Items that came up at the Council meeting on Tuesday night related to public health included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will be sending letters to the Governor and the President regarding the opioid crisis and asking them to declare a state of emergency.</li> <li>• Additional items regarding local action on opioids will be on the agenda for the next meeting in two weeks.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some contracts were approved relating to health, including those for providing services at the jail provided by some of our nonprofit partners (who are doing great work in the jails).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Revisit PHAB roles and responsibilities</b></p>	<p>Sterling Chick introduced himself to new members and thanked them for joining and bringing their expertise. Sterling reviewed the changes in state law made in 2021 requiring health boards to be more balanced between elected officials and other members (for instance, those with sector expertise or lived experience). Counties that are charter counties, which Whatcom is, had the option of not changing their Health Board membership, but having an advisory board comprised of various members with lived experience, sector experts, and community partners. The RCW was sent in the agenda packet for reference, as well as the duties prescribed to this advisory board, which Sterling reviewed for the group. Sterling started a discussion about how the group could accomplish all of those responsibilities. PHAB used to be a small group, as small as five members apart from the council member assigned to PHAB. The smaller group size and meeting in person made it easier to hold discussions and get the work done. That can be more difficult with 21 members who meet both in person and remotely. The hub and spoke model was a direct result of trying to find a way to meet those responsibilities and interact with WCHCS and the Health Board with such a large group. This leads us to a discussion regarding meeting structure and subgroup options.</p>
<p><b>Discuss PHAB meeting structure and subgroup options</b></p>	<p>Erika noted that the participation of members of this group in other boards and commissions (the hub and spoke model) brings important insight to the group. She would like to see PHAB be an organizing body that can add more consistency and direction for all WCHCS-staffed boards and commissions on big topics like equity. Along with the hub and spoke model, another strategy for getting work done with this large group is to break into subgroups. Erika presented a few different subgroup options as presented in the agenda packet (equity, nominations, communications, code changes, operationalizing the model, and board/commission assessment implementation). Ideally, each member would join at least one of these subgroups, which have varying numbers of members and frequency of meetings. Members are welcome to email Erika with their subgroup interests.</p> <p>One idea for making this model work would be to have 45-minute meetings with the full group with the additional time available for subgroup meetings. Julie suggested that subgroup meetings might be easier to do in person and right after a 7 AM PHAB meeting may not be the most convenient time for that. It should be easier for a small group to find a time that works for all their members. Sterling suggested that it might work for some subgroups to do both – meet remotely following PHAB meetings and meet in person on months that PHAB doesn't meet. Adrienne asked about what staff support might look like for these subgroups. Erika answered that she thinks the department can manage staffing this number of subgroups, especially since a couple of these will be more ad hoc, or one-time-only, so there are only four groups that would need to be meeting regularly. We already have staff who are working on assessment, for example, so they could help staff that group. We have communication staff that could help support this work. We just hired an equity position, Danielle Humphreys, who could staff that subgroup. The operationalizing subgroup will likely be a joint effort with Erika and Sterling. Emily suggested that it would be useful to have a project management tool or dashboard for PHAB to help keep track of what we are working on, possibly even including information on what other boards and commissions are working on to build on the hub and spoke model. Sterling added that it would be great to have a</p>

	<p>mechanism for each of our members that are on another board or commission to share what their group is working on without having to go find each group's meeting minutes. Sterling would like to try to come up with something to show people at the meeting in March that might accomplish that. Shu asked if we could talk with legal about how to navigate working together in a project management tool while still maintaining open public meeting regulations. For instance, would it be permissible if we limit the number of members who could update dashboards? Or if we use a forward-facing dashboard would that reduce OPMA issues? Let's identify those issues in advance and design around it. There is a new lawyer for the County Council and Councilmember Scanlon recently asked them to review OPMA and what that looks like for advisory groups, so he would be interested in hearing about some of the barriers OPMA can create for this group. There are some ways the County Council has decided to apply OPMA to advisory groups that the RCW doesn't actually require. Emily suggested that we give each subgroup some scaffolding questions to answer at their first meeting (like what resources do you need, what is your meeting schedule, and how does it relate to ongoing PHAB meetings).</p>
<p><b>Final Comments/Next Steps</b></p>	<p>Sterling invited feedback on the meeting. Adrienne is excited about the proposal for the subcommittees, as it feels like it will give a more direct connection to the work rather than just receiving information. Joni expressed appreciation for Councilmember Scanlon working to figure out what some of the barriers are to communication. Sterling shared that it has been a bit of a jolt transitioning from five to 21 members and figuring out how to meet all the requirements in the legislation and looks forward to moving forward with this structure.</p>
<p><b>Adjourn</b></p>	<p>The meeting adjourned at 8:25 AM.</p>

# Public Health Advisory Board Data Update

1.11.24

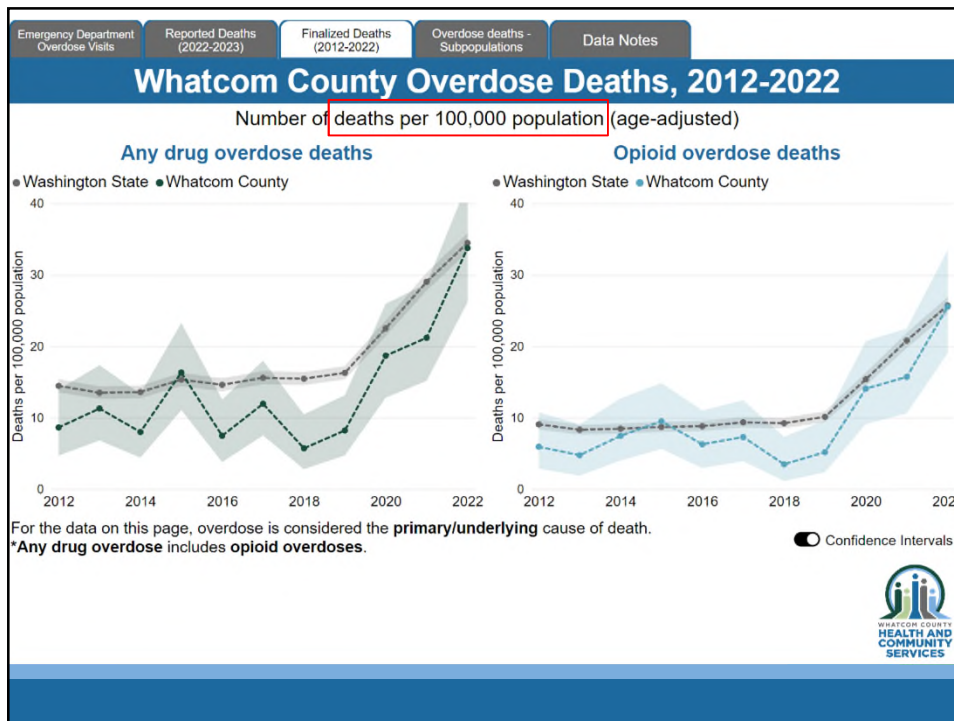
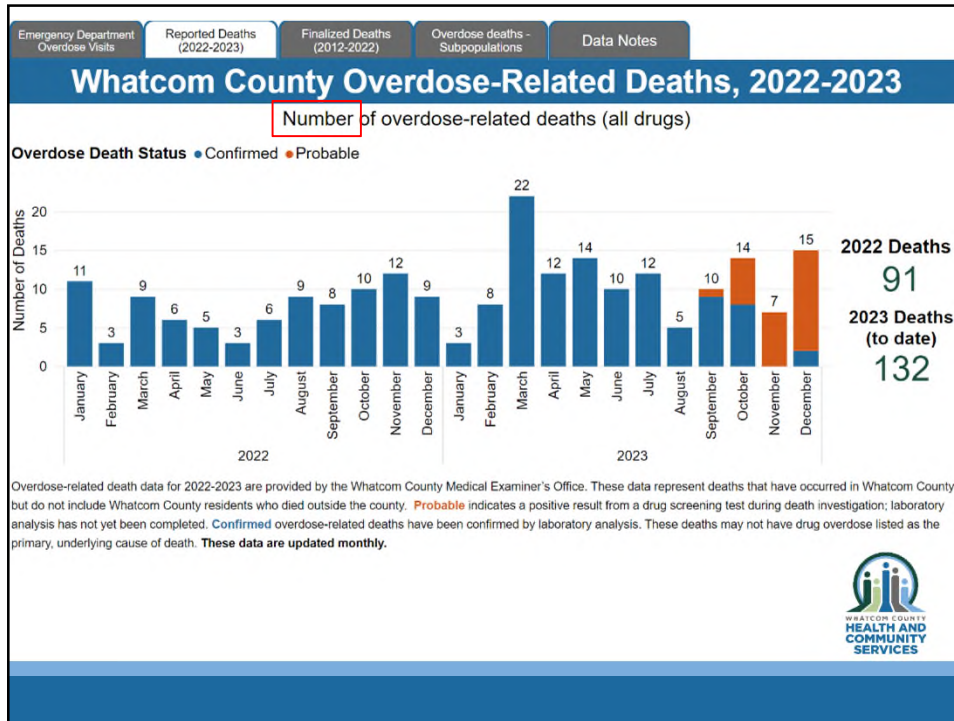


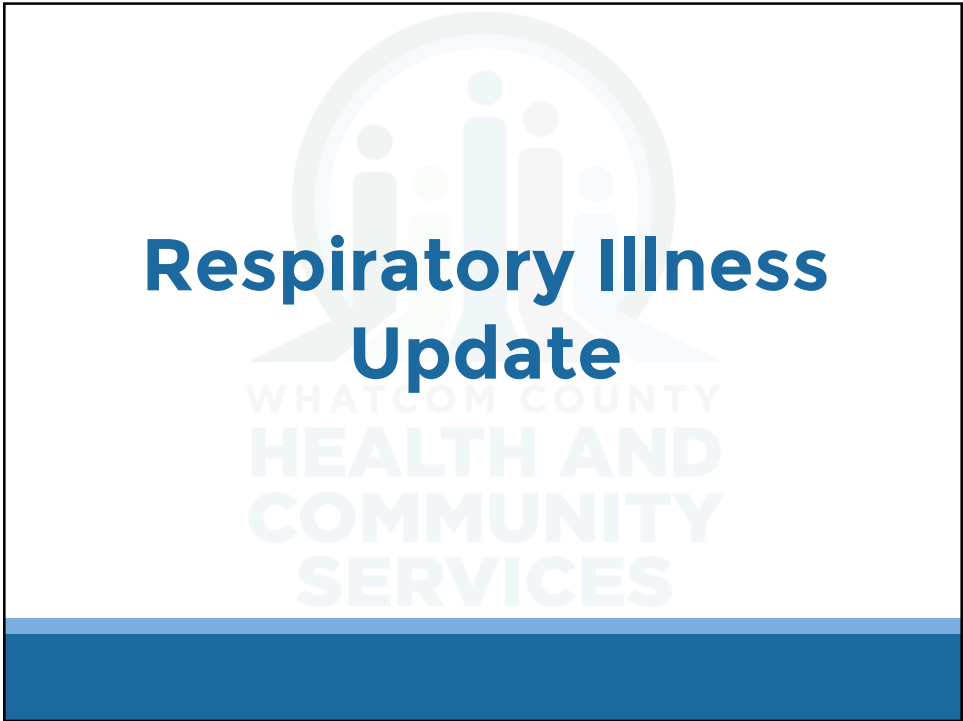
WHATCOM COUNTY  
**HEALTH AND  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICES**



# Drug Overdose Data Update

WHATCOM COUNTY  
HEALTH AND  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICES





### Regional Respiratory Virus Transmission Monitoring

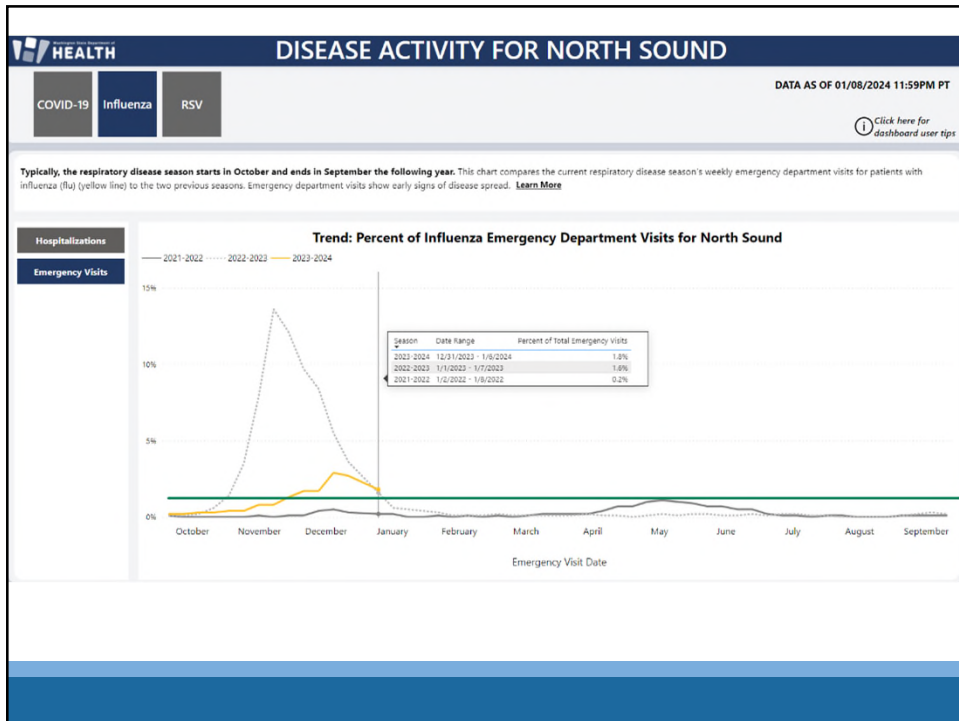
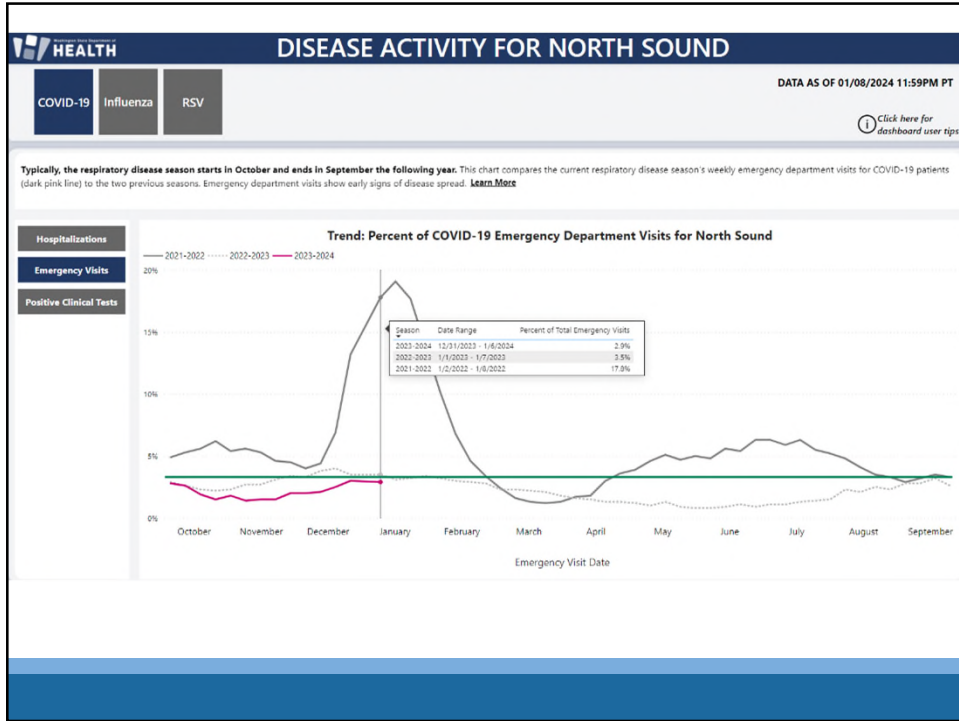
Current status: **Significant community transmission**

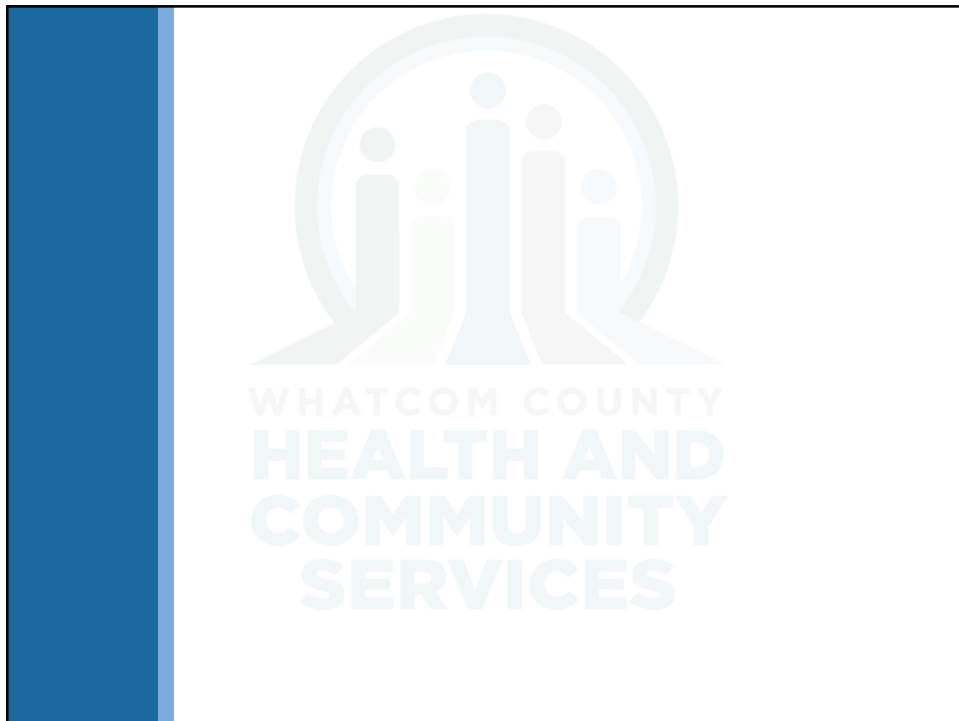
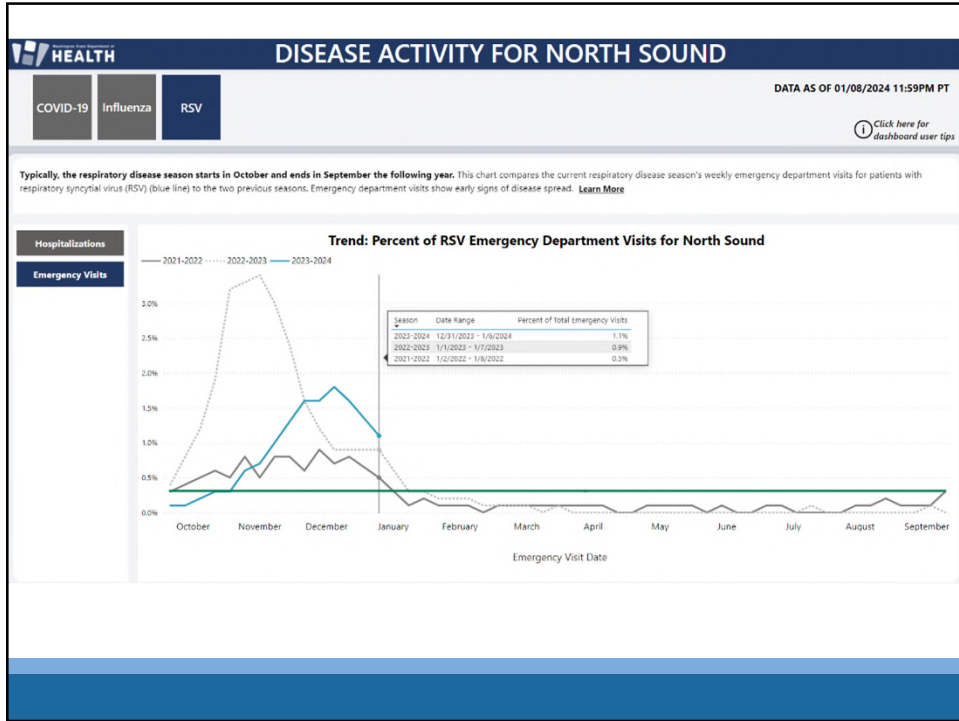
COVID-19	Below transmission alert threshold
Influenza	Above transmission alert threshold
RSV	Above transmission alert threshold

Status current: as of Saturday, 1/6/2024

**North Sound Region respiratory virus emergency department visits:**

- The percent of emergency department visits diagnosed with COVID-19 have been very slowly rising since the end of November.
- The percent of emergency department visits diagnosed with influenza were increasing at the start of the 2023-2024 respiratory disease season, but have been declining since the end of December.
- The percent of emergency department visits diagnosed with RSV have been increasing since the beginning of the 2023-2024 respiratory disease season, but have been declining since the end of December.





# 2024

# VIRTUAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



SCAN TO SIGN UP FOR  
EVENT NOTIFICATIONS  
OR VISIT  
[allhandswhatcom.org](http://allhandswhatcom.org)

TH. JAN 18  
NOON - 1PM

## INTRODUCING WRIC & [WWW.WHATCOMRESOURCES.ORG](http://WWW.WHATCOMRESOURCES.ORG)

Whatcom Resource Information Collaborative (WRIC): Participants will learn about the newly formed WRIC, how to utilize it, and the plans for future WRIC expansion.

TU. FEB 6  
NOON-1PM

## INTRODUCING THE MAC GROUP

A Multi-Agency Coordinating Group was convened in 2023 to coordinate the ongoing community-wide response efforts to the opioid crisis and identify short-term objectives to reduce drug related deaths and mitigate impacts to public safety. Join us to learn more about the work of the MAC Group.

WED. FEB 21  
6-7PM

## PARENTING! SURVIVING THE TEEN YEARS

Parenting is not easy, and can be extra challenging in the teen years. Most youth report their parents/caregivers are the biggest influence in decisions to not use substances. Learn skills and simple actions to support youth and reduce risks.

MON. MAR 4  
NOON-1:30PM

## POLICY ADVOCACY

Join us for a discussion of local, state, and federal policies that impact our community's ability to effectively address the opioid/Fentanyl crisis, reduce overdose deaths, and support effective prevention and treatment programs.

TH. MARCH 14  
TBD

## THE SCIENCE & POWER OF HOPE

Hope science says high hope is the most reliable predictor of thriving for individuals and communities. Dive deeper into the Science of Hope, and learn the theory and to raise hope within individuals, families, schools, non-profit organizations and communities.

TU. APR 9  
9-10:30AM

## OPIOID TREATMENT IN WHATCOM CO.

The landscape of treatment options can be challenging to navigate and understand. Join us to learn more about the local treatment programs available in Whatcom County, how they work, and what's being done to expand those options.

THANK YOU SPONSORS!



northwest youth services



WHATCOM community FOUNDATION



BRAMBLE BERRY HANDCRAFT PROVISIONS



Mount Baker Foundation



BARRON QUINN

The Todd McClure Fund

BLACKWOOD



CHUCKANUT HEALTH FOUNDATION

Investing today for a healthier tomorrow.

# ALL HANDS WHATCOM

# 2024

# COMMUNITY EVENTS



SCAN TO SIGN UP FOR  
EVENT NOTIFICATIONS  
OR VISIT

[ALLHANDSWHATCOM.ORG](http://ALLHANDSWHATCOM.ORG)

# ALL HANDS WHATCOM

**TUES. MARCH 26**

**5:00-8:00PM**

## **NATIVE TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE PNW Coast Salish stories of strength and resilience**

All Hands is partnering with Children of the Setting Sun Productions and NW Indian College for a powerful evening of connection and learning. Join us for a salmon dinner, and viewing the documentary, which looks at the legacy of historical strengths and resilience of Coast Salish people through four intimate portraits of tribal members' journey of healing and wellness to overcome the impacts of the opioid crisis. Presentation to follow.



*Scan QR code to view the trailer*

**T/W JUNE 25 & 26**

**8:30AM-4:30PM**

## **2024 OPIOID SUMMIT: NEXT GEN! Supporting our community's youth through prevention, connection, and healing**

Our 2024 Summit is inspired by the amazing Next Gen panel of young people from the 2023 Summit, and the overwhelming requests from the community to prioritize actions that: prevent youth addiction, support healthy families, and build systems and services that will help our young people thrive. Join us for a packed two day event of learning and action.

**FRI AUGUST 9**

**8:30AM-2:30PM**

## **RE-ENTRY SIMULATION Building empathy & reimagining our community's pathway from incarceration**

All Hands Whatcom is partnering with Kitsap Strong and Up From Slavery to bring a powerful in-person opportunity to our community. This eye-opening simulation sheds a light on the significant obstacles faced for those fresh out of incarceration and attempting to navigate the system upon their release. Following the simulation, participants will have the opportunity to help reimagine what our local systems of re-entry support can and should look like.

***All Hands events are only possible with  
the generous support of our local sponsors!***

***We need your support!***

***Join us.***

*Contact:*

[Emily@ChuckanutHealthFoundation.org](mailto:Emily@ChuckanutHealthFoundation.org)



**CHUCKANUT  
HEALTH FOUNDATION**

Investing today for a healthier tomorrow.



**PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD  
Discussion Form**

March 7, 2024

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**AGENDA ITEM #2:** *Resolution Declaring a State of Emergency re: Fentanyl*  
**PRESENTERS:** *Barry Buchanan, Chair, Whatcom County Council; Co-sponsor of the resolution*

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**BOARD ACTION:**       Action Item       Discussion       FYI - Only

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On February 6, Councilmembers Elenbaas and Buchanan introduced a resolution that would declare the fentanyl crisis an emergency. This was an additional step following 7-0 passage by Council of resolutions requesting the President and Governor declare declarations of emergency.

While the declaration was discussed in the Committee of the Whole on February 6, no action was taken, as the Council wished to talk with stakeholders including relevant county staff and elected officials and outside boards, commissions, and task forces.

Councilmember Buchanan will join the PHAB meeting to discuss the resolution and gather feedback from members.

**EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS**

***(include data or information about how topic impacts or could impact equity, including racial equity)***

Declaring fentanyl an emergency will position Whatcom County to receive any emergency funding to combat and prevent fentanyl use. Certain populations, including residents who are unsheltered and those with pre-existing behavioral health, substance use disorder, or history of trauma, are at risk of developing opioid use disorder. Supporting these populations will impact those most vulnerable to overdose death or poor health outcomes.

**BOARD ROLE / ACTION REQUESTED**

Provide feedback and suggestions for Council.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

Resolution AB2024-090



RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**IDENTIFYING WHATCOM COUNTY APPROACHES  
TO THE FENTANYL EMERGENCY**

**WHEREAS**, according to WhatcomOverdosePrevention.org, overdose deaths in Whatcom County in 2023 (132 to date) exceed deaths in the prior year and have markedly increased every year since 2018; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States is facing the worst drug crisis in its history, and the resulting tragedies are decimating families and contributing to extraordinary levels of despair in our communities; and

**WHEREAS**, there exists a substantial likelihood of risk to persons and property unless further efforts are taken to reduce the threat from fentanyl; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Department of Drug Enforcement (DEA) identifies fentanyl as a potent synthetic opioid drug approximately 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin; and

**WHEREAS**, Seven out of ten DEA tested pills with fentanyl are potentially deadly making it likely that 'one pill can kill,' and in 2023, the DEA seized over 360 million deadly doses of fentanyl; and

**WHEREAS**, our community's approach to the fentanyl use and fentanyl-related crimes must be different than our approach to other illegal drug use in our community; and

**WHEREAS**, the use of Fentanyl continues spreading throughout our community, and new and immediate avenues to enhance capabilities, coordination, and collaboration across local, state, tribal, and federal agencies are needed to promote public health and safety; and

**WHEREAS**, in June 2023, healthcare workers, tribal leaders, educators, community members and law enforcement gathered for a 2-day workshop, All Hands Whatcom: Opioid Summit, as a call to listening, healing, and action for the Whatcom community in response to the devastating consequences of fentanyl, meth, and opioids; and

1           **WHEREAS**, in June 2023, a coalition of government agencies, community-based  
2 organizations, healthcare providers, and others from across Whatcom County formed a Multi-  
3 Agency Coordination (MAC) Group in response to the local opioid and overdose crisis; and  
4

5           **WHEREAS**, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), a  
6 Multiagency coordination system (MAC) is used for extraordinarily large, complex incidents  
7 occurring in the city or county involving numerous agencies and/or jurisdictions; and  
8

9           **WHEREAS**, the mission of the MAC Group is to coordinate the ongoing community-wide  
10 response efforts to the opioid crisis, identify and prioritize additional short-term objectives and  
11 strategies to reduce drug-related deaths, and mitigate the impacts on property and public safety  
12 in Whatcom County; and  
13

14           **WHEREAS**, the Whatcom County MAC group aligns with the Washington State Opioid and  
15 Overdose Response (SOOR) plan, which includes five priority goals

- 16           1. Prevent opioid misuse,
- 17           2. Identify and treat substance use disorder,
- 18           3. Ensure and improve the health and wellness of individuals that use drugs,
- 19           4. Use data to detect opioid misuse/abuse, monitor illness, injury and death, and  
20           evaluate interventions,
- 21           5. Support individuals in recovery; and  
22

23           **WHEREAS**, on September 22, 2023, the Lummi Indian Business Council approved  
24 Resolution 2023-145, declaring a state of emergency in response to the fentanyl crisis; and  
25

26           **WHEREAS**, Resolution 2023-145 provides the Lummi Indian Business Council with new  
27 and immediate avenues to enhance capabilities, coordination, and collaboration across tribal,  
28 local, state, and federal agencies and bring together state agencies, local law enforcement, and  
29 internal and external partners to pursue and achieve solutions that promote public health and  
30 safety on the Lummi Reservation; and  
31

32           **WHEREAS**, on October 24, 2023, the Whatcom County Council approved Resolution 2023-  
33 041 supporting the Lummi Indian Business Council's (LIBC) state of emergency declaration in  
34 response to the fentanyl crisis; and  
35

36           **WHEREAS**, on December 12, 2023, Whatcom County Councilmembers Buchanan and  
37 Elenbaas sent a letter requesting that President Biden declare a national emergency on the opioid  
38 epidemic and open additional resources and authorities to address the crisis; and  
39

40           **WHEREAS**, the Whatcom County Council understands coordination between all agencies  
41 in our county as well as state and federal supports is needed to fight the fentanyl crisis; and

1           **WHEREAS**, declarations of emergency at the federal, state, and county levels can open up  
2 additional resources, funding, and assistance to address the fentanyl emergency; and  
3

4           **WHEREAS**, Chapter 36.27 RCW establishes the Whatcom County Prosecuting Attorney as  
5 the independent legal advisor of the legislative authority, prosecutor of all criminal and civil  
6 actions, including felony charges, among other duties; and  
7

8           **WHEREAS**, Chapter 9.94A RCW establishes accountable standard ranges for sentencing in  
9 the criminal justice system, and the Prosecuting Attorney makes sentencing recommendations;  
10 and  
11

12           **WHEREAS**, Whatcom County Council Resolution 2024-002 respectfully requests that the  
13 Governor of the State of Washington declare a national emergency to address the fentanyl crisis;  
14 and  
15

16           **WHEREAS**, Whatcom County Council Resolution 2024-003 respectfully requests that the  
17 President of the United States declare a national emergency to address the fentanyl crisis.  
18

19           **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Whatcom County Council acknowledges  
20 there is a countywide fentanyl crisis impacting people, businesses, and properties in our  
21 communities; and  
22

23           **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Whatcom County Council  
24 recommends the following approaches to the fentanyl crisis:  
25

- 26           1. Request official declarations of emergency.
  - 27               a. Request that both state and federal emergency declarations be made to expand  
28               efforts and open up additional resources and tools to protect the lives, public  
29               health, and safety of our community members
  - 30               b. Request that the Whatcom County Executive in coordination with the County  
31               Sheriff, declare a countywide emergency for fentanyl in accordance with the  
32               Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) allowing the following:
    - 33                   i. Entering into contracts and incurring obligations necessary to combat  
34                   such emergency situations to protect the health and safety of persons;  
35                   and
    - 36                   ii. Providing appropriate emergency assistance to victims, and
    - 37                   iii. Other actions deemed appropriate by the Health Officer and Director of  
38                   Emergency Management or their designees.
- 39           2. Enhance legal methods to address fentanyl-related crimes.
  - 40               a. Encourage using the full force of the law to address major crimes and offenses  
41               related to fentanyl;
  - 42               b. Request that the judicial branch and courts impose the strictest sentences  
43               available for fentanyl related crimes;
  - 44               c. Request that the judicial branch and courts offer treatment and recovery  
45               options in lieu of lengthy sentences when appropriate and effective to persuade  
46               people to choose treatment over punishment;  
47

- d. Request that the Whatcom County Prosecutor utilize their power and discretion to prioritize the prosecution of fentanyl-related crimes and seek strict sentences;
  - e. Advocate at the state and federal levels to increase sentencing for fentanyl-related crimes above and beyond levels for other drug crimes.
3. Provide staffing and financial resources to local efforts.
- a. Prioritize county staff and financial resources to address the fentanyl crisis; and
  - b. Explore options to expand navigator programs to increase efforts on overdose prevention; and
  - c. Provide full support to the MAC group working on the fentanyl crisis.

**APPROVED** this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

\_\_\_\_\_  
Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

      /s/ Royce Buckingham/by email 1/9/2023/ch  
Civil Deputy Prosecutor



**PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD  
Discussion Form**

March 7, 2024

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<b>AGENDA ITEM #3:</b>	<i>Workgroup to develop strategies to support unsheltered residents</i>		
<b>PRESENTERS:</b>	<i>Ann Beck, Community Health and Human Services Manager</i>		
<b>BOARD ACTION:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Action Item	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion	<input type="checkbox"/> FYI - Only

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On February 6, Councilmembers Buchanan, Galloway, and Scanlon expressed an interest in forming a workgroup to identify solutions for emergency and severe weather sheltering. More broadly, but related, Health and Community Services will soon begin work on a new 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness and has a desire to convene partners, experts, and community representatives to help develop priorities and strategies to inform the plan.

Staff requests PHAB advice and expertise to refine the proposed workgroup objectives, process overview, and desired outcomes, as well as suggestions on organizations and individuals to serve on the workgroup. Staff will follow up with a letter from PHAB leadership to Council reflecting these recommendations.

**EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS**

***(include data or information about how topic impacts or could impact equity, including racial equity)***

Homelessness results in poor mental and physical health outcomes, and dramatically decreases life expectancy.

**BOARD ROLE / ACTION REQUESTED**

Provide feedback for staff and send a letter with suggestions for Council.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

Housing Action Taskforce Document



## *Housing Action Taskforce – Draft Structure and Membership for PHAB Consideration*

### **Primary Objective:**

- Develop a series of recommendations to reduce unsheltered homelessness in Whatcom County.

### **Process Overview:**

- Develop PITA (prevention/intervention/treatment/aftercare) strategies to prevent housing loss, mitigate harms of unsheltered homelessness, promote use of emergency shelters, support healing and recovery process, provide long-term stability support as needed.

### **Steps:**

- Identify community advocates, policy makers, individuals with lived experience, and other impacted stakeholders to provide input about direct and indirect impacts of unsheltered homelessness.
- Develop short and medium-term strategies to fill or eliminate gaps in services, including
  - plan a coordinated response utilizing partner strengths
  - designate lead party(ies) responsible for implementing selected strategies
  - Identify shortcomings or gaps of short-term response
  - Identify preventable causes of initial and repeated unsheltered homelessness and develop prevention strategies

**Strategy Development Team** – Includes people with lived experience, people experienced in working with the target population, people familiar with leveraging and deploying public and private resources

- Council member(s)
- Outreach staff
  - HOT (Bellingham)
  - Bridge2Services (Rural focus)
  - Healthcare
- Emergency shelter staff
  - Low-barrier winter shelter
  - Transitional services (YWCA)
  - Base Camp or other LMM Staff
- Supportive Housing
  - Permanent Supportive Housing operator (Pioneer, Catholic Community Svcs, or OppCo)
- Public Policy
  - County Exec's office
- Health & Community Services staff
  - Housing program, human services, response division, and/or environmental health
- Camp clean-up or remediation
  - Public Works, Bellingham Police, and/or WCSO
- Behavioral Health Provider
  - Client based: Compass Health, Unity Care, SeaMar, etc.
  - Crisis Stability Center, Detox, Designated Crisis Responder, and/or PeaceHealth ED

## Outputs

- Articulate strategy recommendations within six months that correspond with four focus areas:
  1. Reducing primary harm (as experienced by people experiencing unsheltered homelessness)
  2. Reducing secondary harm (as experienced by environment and community) caused by unsheltered homelessness
  3. Interventions to accelerate transitions from unsheltered homelessness
  4. Interventions to decrease new occurrences of unsheltered homelessness
- Identify partners and resources to implement above strategies
- Prioritize strategies within each of the above four focus areas
- Develop and enact monitoring and evaluation plan to analyze progress



**PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD  
Discussion Form**

March 7, 2024

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**AGENDA ITEM #4:** *Sub-group follow up*  
**PRESENTERS:** *Sterling Chick, PHAB Chair*

**BOARD ACTION:**       Action Item       Discussion       FYI - Only

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The PHAB discussed and decided to adopt a sub-group model so additional work/progress could occur outside regular meetings. The purpose of this discussion is to follow up, ensure all questions are answered, and discuss sub-group membership if certain sub-groups are underrepresented.

***EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS***

***(include data or information about how topic impacts or could impact equity, including racial equity)***

Sub-groups allow the PHAB to more quickly and nimbly achieve its goals and state/legal purpose, which include advancing equity, developing an equity framework, and providing more opportunity to receive community feedback.

***BOARD ROLE / ACTION REQUESTED***

Commit to one sub-group.

***ATTACHMENT(S)***

Sub-group explanation document.



## **PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD SUB-GROUP OPTIONS**

### **Equity**

*Goal/Purpose:* One of the overarching areas for department and community strategic action is to decrease health disparities and inequities. Health and Community Services (HCS) will welcome a dedicated Equity position in early January, who can provide support to PHAB members in identifying an equity framework (per WAC – use a health equity framework to conduct, assess, and identify the community health needs of the jurisdiction...) and developing recommendations for implementation of the ‘Racism as a Public Health Crisis’ resolution. This group will also work collaboratively with the Whatcom Racial Equity Commission to ensure work aligns and supports their goals.

*Membership:* 3-4 members

*Frequency:* monthly or every other month for the year

### **Nominations**

*Goal/Purpose:* As PHAB implements its hub and spoke model, this committee would be responsible for contacting boards, commissions, and key partners that lack a member. This group would also review applicants and make recommendations to the full PHAB and County Council on who to appoint.

*Membership:* 3 members

*Frequency:* As needed/as vacancies occur

### **Communications**

*Goal/Purpose:* PHAB does not currently have formalized or effective methods to communicate with partners, the public, the county council, and other boards and commissions. Per WAC, PHAB is responsible for ‘providing community forums and hearings’ and ‘promoting public participation in and identification of local public health needs’. This group would develop options, make recommendations and support staff in producing and disseminating information about PHAB priorities and activities.

*Membership:* 3-4 members

*Frequency:* Monthly for the year



### **Code Changes**

*Goal/Purpose:* The current code does not support joint decision-making between boards/commissions and the county council regarding applicant recommendations and does not allow for time to review. This group would work with staff to develop code change recommendations for Council approval to ensure better engagement and decision-making.

*Membership:* 2-3 members

*Frequency:* One meeting to review and finalize draft

### **Operationalizing the Model**

*Goal/Purpose:* When former Chair Steve Bennett and Director Erika Lautenbach presented the Hub and Spoke Model, there were significant questions about how to operationalize the model. This group will be charged with supporting department and PHAB leadership in developing a working organization around the model.

*Membership:* 5-6 members

*Frequency:* Monthly for the year

### **Board/Commission Assessment Implementation**

*Goal/Purpose:* This group will support staff in selecting priority items and implementing the recommendations made in the 2023 Board and Commission Assessment. This group will also provide recommendations and support for other HCS boards and commissions to implement the assessment.

*Membership:* 4-5 members

*Frequency:* Monthly or every other month for the year