



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
Call to order	Sterling Chick presented a land acknowledgment. Roll call of Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) members.
Approve Minutes	Minutes from the meeting held on December 7, 2023 were approved.
Public Comment	The following people spoke: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natalie Chavez
Health Director/Health Officer Update	<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"> • Drug overdose data – https://whatcomoverdoseprevention.org/data/ • Respiratory virus transmission monitoring – https://www.whatcomcounty.us/4281/Respiratory-Virus-Data-Dashboards. <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 Council and the state legislature. We have just hired a new opioid position, Kari Holley, funded</p>

	<p>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>Health Board/County Council Update</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"> • 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. • Additional items regarding local action on opioids will be on the agenda for the next meeting in two weeks.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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).
<p>Revisit PHAB roles and responsibilities</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>Discuss PHAB meeting structure and subgroup options</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>Final Comments/Next Steps</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>Adjourn</p>	<p>The meeting adjourned at 8:25 AM.</p>

Public Health Advisory Board Data Update

1.11.24

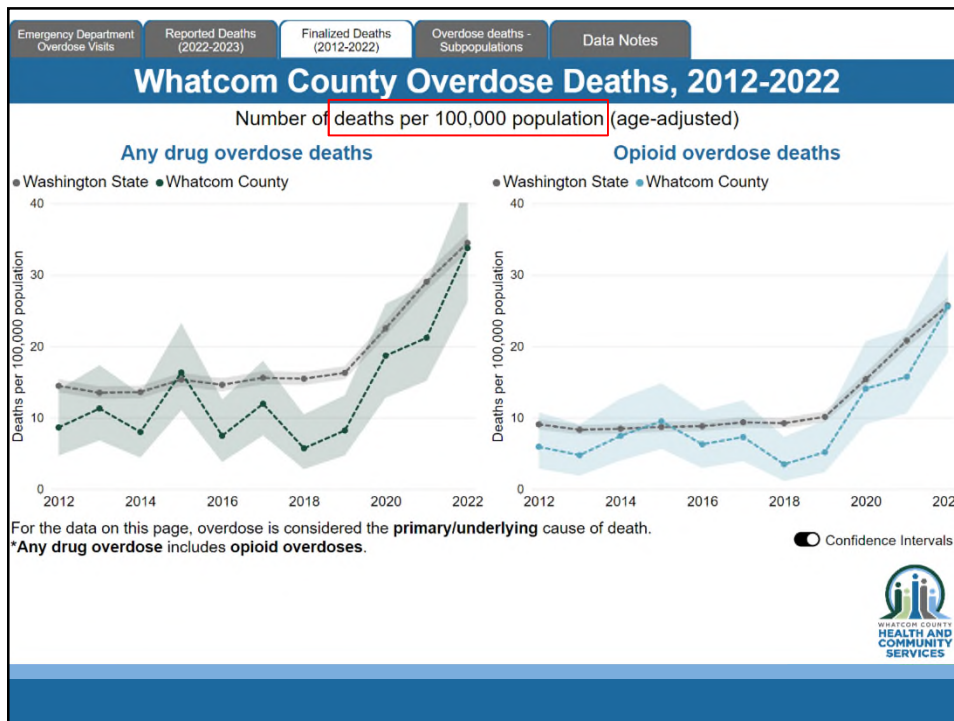
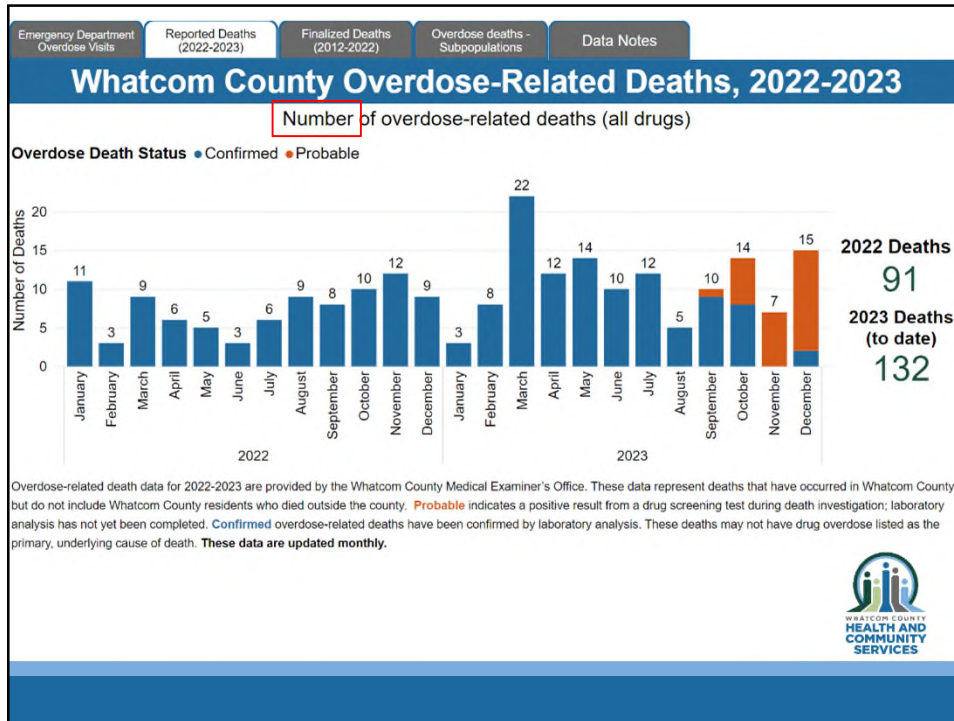


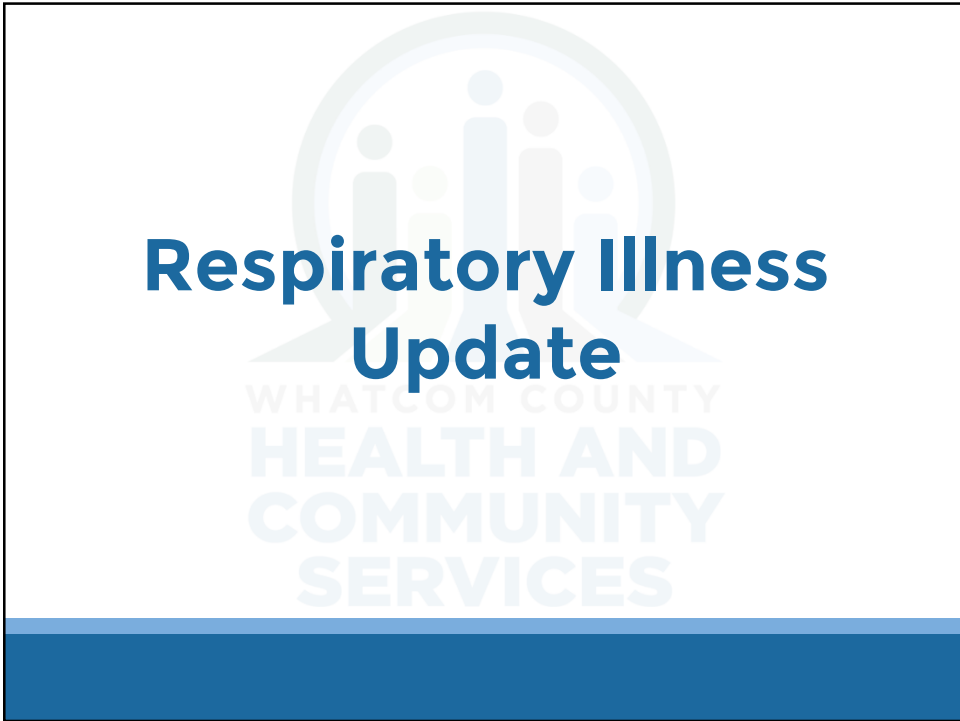
WHATCOM COUNTY
**HEALTH AND
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SERVICES**



Drug Overdose Data Update

WHATCOM COUNTY
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Regional Respiratory Virus Transmission Monitoring

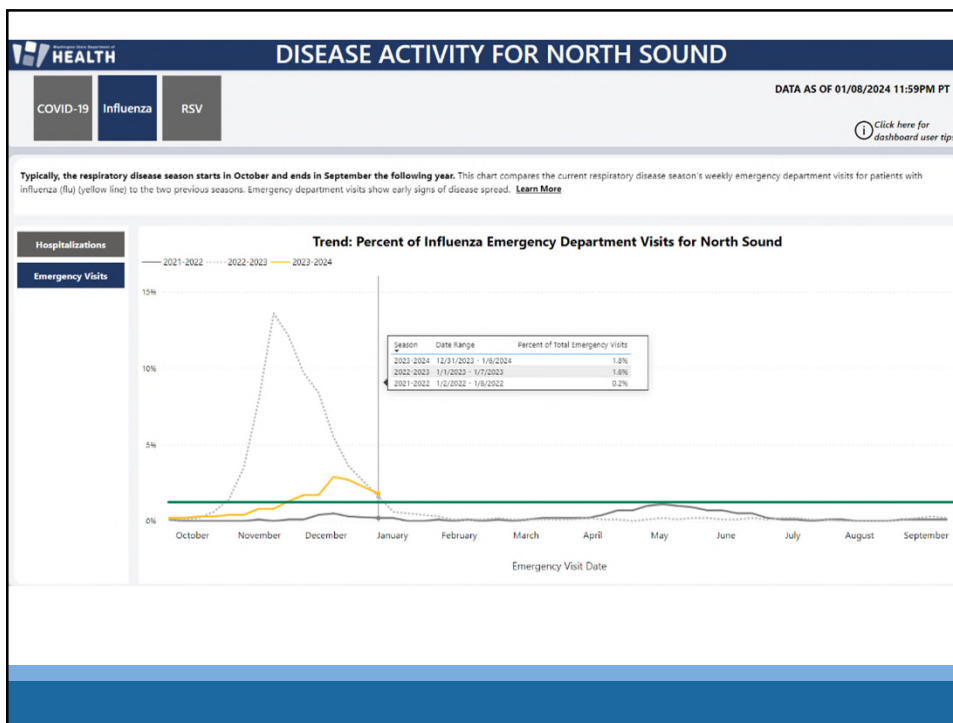
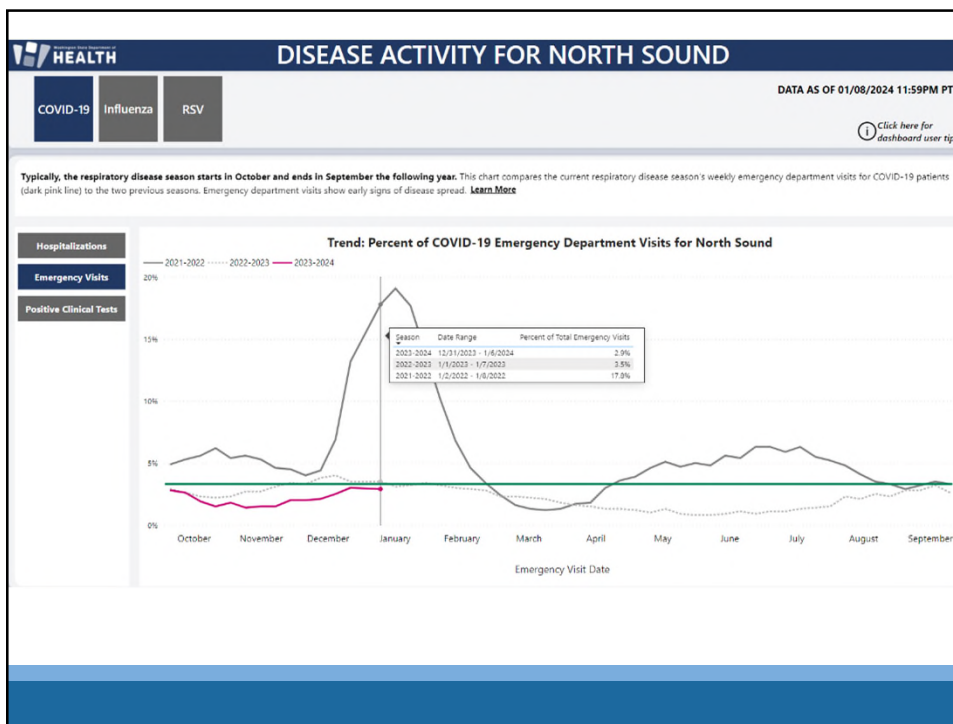
Current status: **Significant community transmission**

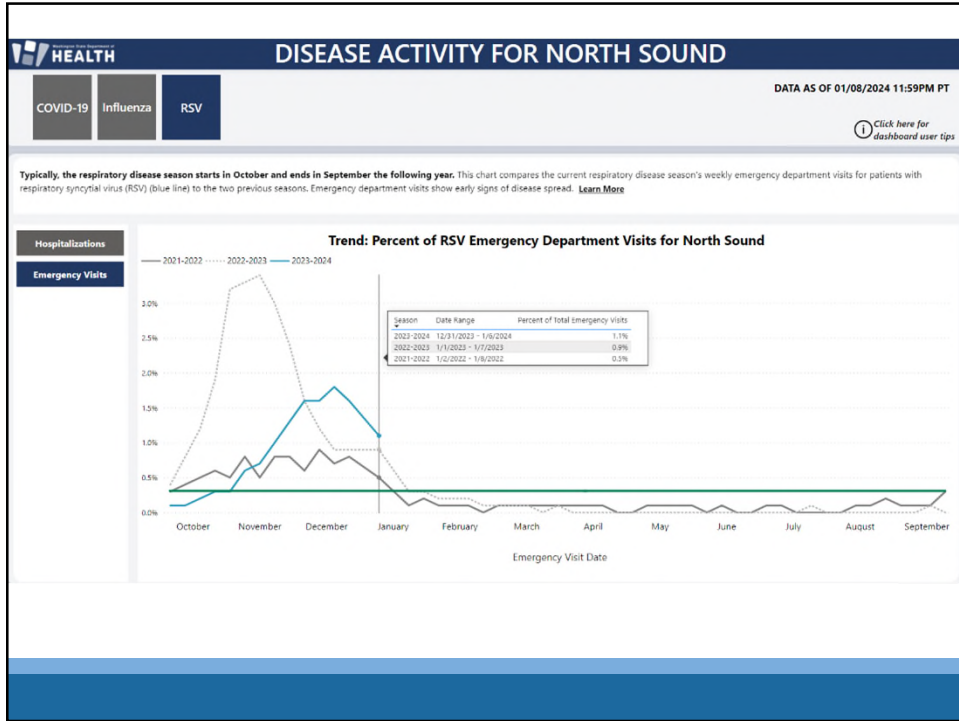
COVID-19	Below transmission alert threshold
Influenza	Above transmission alert threshold
RSV	Above transmission alert threshold

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

TH. JAN 18
NOON - 1PM

INTRODUCING WRIC & 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.

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northwest youth services



WHATCOM community FOUNDATION



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Mount Baker Foundation



BARRON QUINN

The Todd McClure Fund

BLACKWOOD



CHUCKANUT HEALTH FOUNDATION

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ALL HANDS WHATCOM

2024

COMMUNITY EVENTS



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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



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