



**FINAL PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD (PHAB) MEETING MINUTES**  
**April 15, 2021, 2:00-4:00 pm**

**Attendance**

*Board members present:* Dr. Eli Schwarz, Kelle Little, Dr. Bob Dannenhoffer, Dr. Sarah Present, Dr. Veronica Irvin, Muriel DeLaVergne-Brown, Rachael Banks, Carrie Brogoitti, Alejandro Qeral, Dr. Jeanne Savage, Dr. David Bangsberg, Rebecca Tiel, Carrie Brogoitti, Eve Rippleteau, Sarah Poe

*Board members absent:* Dr. Dean Sidelinger, Dr. Jeanne Savage

*Oregon Health Authority (OHA) staff:* Cara Biddlecom, Sara Beaudrault, Wendy Polulech, Julie Johnson, Lisa Rau

*Members of the public:* None

**Meeting Objectives**

- Approve March Meeting Minutes
- Discuss Public Health Advisory Board Subcommittees
- Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant Update
- COVID-19 Response and Vaccine Equity Presentation
- PHAB Member Discussion for Future Meeting Topics

**Welcome and Agenda Review**

Veronica Irvin, *PHAB Chair*

Dr. Irvin welcomed everyone to the meeting. She stated that this meeting was running two hours, as compared to last month's 90 minutes, in order to allow time for guest presentations and questions afterwards.

Cara Biddlecom took role. A quorum was present. Dr. Eli Schwarz requested that the spelling of his name be corrected in the March minutes. The PHAB approved the meeting minutes unanimously (to include the corrected spelling of Dr. Schwarz's name.)

Dr. Irvin pointed out that there were two Oregon Health Policy Board handouts in the packet this month. One was a Committee Summary, and the other was a handout on the Medicare 1115 Waiver Process. There will be more information about the Medicare Waiver in upcoming months.

### **Discuss PHAB Subcommittees**

Sara Beaudrault, *Oregon Health Authority*

Sara provided an update on the three PHAB subcommittees:

- Accountability Metrics
- Incentive and Funding
- Strategic Data Plan

She said that the subcommittees have not met yet, but the Accountability Metrics group was scheduled to meet next week, and the Strategic Data Plan meeting was meeting the following week.

If you are a member of the Incentive and Funding meeting, we will be getting together in May to discuss components of the Public Health Modernization formula, should we get additional funding.

The members of the two scheduled subcommittees received an orientation meeting on Monday, April 5, to talk about the responsibilities of being a committee member. However, the main purpose of the meeting was to provide time for community partners and OHA staff to connect and get to know one another.

An overview of PHAB and Oregon Meeting Laws was discussed, and members were asked what OHA can do to make this a successful partnership going forward. Committee members were also reminded that these meetings take place in a public forum, where public feedback and testimony is allowed, and the public can also make public record requests of the meetings.

Next month, the PHAB will hearing from the subcommittees themselves and the direction they will be heading.

Dr. Irvin invited any of the community members of the subcommittees who were attending this meeting to introduce themselves, but there was no response. She asked if any PHAB members had questions about subcommittees, but no one had a comment.

### **Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant Update**

Wendy Polulech, *Oregon Health Authority*

Dr. Irvin reminded everyone that PHAB is the Public Advisory Board for this grant, and OHA typically provides an update on the current year's funding for the grant. Next month, OHA will be proposing the fiscal 2022 workplan and budget and hold the block grant public hearing. She introduced Wendy Polulech, who is an Operations Analyst and the Block Grant Coordinator while Danna Drum is on job rotation with the VPU. She will be giving today's update and presenting next month's proposed 2022 budget and workplan.

Wendy announced that the grant was approximately \$1.1 million for the fiscal year 2021, which ran from October 2020 to March 2021. She mentioned that this was a typical grant size for Oregon. About \$85,000 of the grant money went to Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (OCADSV.) The remainder of the budget went towards improving health services infrastructure, such as "Healthier Together Oregon" and Public Health Modernization.

Dr. Schwarz commented that cases of domestic violence seem to be rising, yet the grant money amount stays the same. He was wondering why the grant amount could not be increased to help deal with this crisis. Cara Biddlecom responded that the pass-through money sent to the OCADSV is a pre-determined amount by the Federal Government as part of the conditions of the grant.

Dr. Schwarz shared that he attended a recent session of the house legislature and noticed the increased focus and positive attitudes towards Public Health Modernization and the need to infuse more funds into this. He wondered if the PHAB has asked the legislature for more money towards modernization, or are any of the federal relief funds going towards this?

Cara replied that last summer, OHA requested a \$68.9 investment in Public Health Modernization as a request for its biannual budget. In the Governor's recommended budget released in December, Governor Brown allocated \$30 million for this. Currently, this is an ongoing conversation in the Joint Committee on Ways and Means regarding OHA's budget and how much of it will be invested in Public Health Modernization.

Regarding the America Rescue Plan Act Funds, Cara said that we have not received any news about this topic, but there is still more funding to come. Currently, the relief funds we have received have been earmarked for supporting immunizations for COVID-19 (about \$38 million) and will be distributed to LPHAs and CBOs to serve their communities and help reduce health inequities. We also have received money to go towards the safe re-opening of schools.

Dr. Present asked if it was possible to funnel more funding from the block grant into the OCADSV, if Oregon chose to. Cara was not sure of the federal process but didn't think it would be a big issue and that she and Wendy would investigate it. She explained as a condition of the funding, states needed to choose one or more "Healthy People 2030" objectives to work towards. In Oregon we chose Public Health Infrastructure and Public Health Agency Quality Improvement Program as our objectives, and we must track the budgets for both of those objectives.

Wendy continued to review how the funding was spent and invited anyone who would like additional details to contact her. She ended by stating that the money given to OCADVA was used for staffing, subgrantees, and assessment of program efficiency and equity. There were no further questions for Wendy.

A handout about the specifics of the grant is in today's meeting packet.

### **PHAB Member Discussion of Upcoming Issues and Topics**

Veronica Irvin, *PHAB Chair*

Dr. Irvin asked if the discussion section of the agenda could be moved up since the meeting was ahead of schedule. This would allow the speakers to present at their scheduled times. She invited everyone to share any issues or topics that PHAB members would like to see at future board meetings, adding that she would like to have an update on OCADVA programs, funding, and initiatives at a future meeting. There were no additional comments.

Since the presenters were not on the call yet, Cara asked Dr. David Bangsberg if there were any updates from the Oregon Health Policy Board (OHPB) on the engagement of the 1115 Waiver process since the last PHAB meeting. Dr. Bangsberg mentioned the OHPB continued to work on the Governor's requests regarding the Medicaid Waiver and healthcare cost containment, and the alignment of the two. He feels an important role that PHAB can play is figuring out how equity plays into these two topics and how to apply lessons learned so far.

Dr. Schwarz asked Dr. Bangsberg whether or not the OHPB discusses and addresses topics like health biases, as exhibited in a recent article in the Oregonian. Dr. Bangsberg replied that they are looking at measures of health equity in populations and where the gaps are.

Cara suggested a short break and the group dispersed until 2:50 p.m.

### **Discuss COVID-19 Response and Vaccine Equity**

Julie Johnson, *Oregon Health Authority Tribal Affairs*

Sharon Stanphill, DrPH, RD, Chief Health Officer  
*Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians*

Lisa Guzman  
*Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center*

Dr. Irvin welcomed everyone back from the break and introduced the guest speakers: Julie Johnson, Sharon Stanphill, and Lisa Guzman. She mentioned that many Oregon tribes have been engaged in Health Care Modernization since 2017. She also thanked Kelle Little for her service in representing Oregon tribes on the PHAB committee.

Julie Johnson began by introducing herself as a Peyote woman and mother. Her role as the Tribal Affairs Director over the past year has been to uphold the government-to-government relationships with the nine federally-recognized tribes in Oregon. Each tribe is an individual sovereign nation with the authority to govern over its own lands and people. She stressed that it's important to understand that the relationship begins at the federal level and is upheld by the state. She stated that her people have been here since time immemorial and were put here to look after the land and the people.

Julie Johnson then presented a slide show documenting the work of OHA with the tribes and their response to COVID-19. She stressed the importance of maintaining the supportive relationships between all partners.

The question was asked if Julie had any advice to give counties and agencies serving indigenous populations to better help them promote COVID-19 vaccinations, recognizing that messaging will look different from community to community. Julie said that the other presenters will provide more information about this. However, many of the tribes have great communication teams with websites using videos, flyers, story-telling, and other methods to encourage vaccinations. All partners have worked hard in developing culturally responsible and specific media campaigns. About 30,000 vaccines have been allocated to the tribes; six tribes went with OHA and three with IHS. She then introduced Dr. Sharon Stanphill.

Dr. Stanphill began by thanking Kelle Little and Julie Johnson, and was especially grateful to Dr. Bob Dannenhoffer for his tireless work in Douglas County. She continued by presenting a slide show documenting the progress her organization made using the Public Health Modernization funds they received in preparing for and responding to the pandemic.

As a follow-up question, Dr. Stanphill was asked about the statistics of disease rate and mortality of Oregon tribes. She mentioned that her tribe, Cow Creek, had been extremely fortunate with only twelve positive cases and no deaths, but many of her sister tribes here in Oregon and Washington were hit extremely hard.

Dr. Present was wondering about two things: where is your tribe headed after the vaccine is over based on what you learned this year, and what are the vaccine hesitancy rates in your community? Dr. Stanphill is anticipating that the funding will go away at some point and they

are preparing for that, but they also are writing grants and looking for other funding sources to continue building infrastructure. She said there was a tremendous amount of vaccine hesitancy due to the historical trauma of their people and the general reluctance to take an unknown medication.

Lisa Guzman went next. She showed a video from Elkhorn Media created for tribal communities to address vaccine hesitancy.

She then presented a slide show showing how the Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center developed the infrastructure to handle the pandemic while providing regular health care at the same time. She also shared a “Community Vaccination Centers Playbook” through FEMA. Their group found this playbook very helpful in providing a step-by-step process in creating a vaccination event. There were no questions from the committee.

### **Public Comments**

Cara Biddlecom, *Oregon Health Authority*

There were no public comments.

### **Next Meeting Agenda Items**

Veronica Irvin, *PHAB Chair*

- Update on Federal funding
- Update on State Public Health Modernization funding

**The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.**

**The next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 20, from 2-4:30 p.m.**