



**POPULATION
HEALTH TRUST**
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Skagit County Board of Health

Peter Browning, Chair
Lisa Janicki, Commissioner
Ron Wesen, Commissioner

PHT Meeting Minutes **December 5, 2024, 8:30-10:30 am** **Chinook Meeting Room**

Members: Dan Berard, Patty Codd, Bill Henkel, Sonia Garza, Chris Johnston, Linden Jordan, Maddy Mackenzie, Julie Merriam, Kevin Murphy, Marueen Pettitt, Lyndie Simmons, Dean Snider, John Sternlicht, Anneliese Vance-Sherman

Community Stakeholders: Chris Baldwin, Kas Church, Kristen Ekstran, Jennnifer Sass-Walton

Ex-Officio: Howard Leibrand

Guests: Kelli Baker, Sandi Phinney

Agenda review and Steering Updates

Kristen welcomed the group and provided an overview for the day. She also shared a conversation during a recent Steering meeting regarding sector representation. Polly represented the built environment and with her departure, the Trust needs to brainstorm a replacement. She invited the Trust to think about organizations and individuals that they might recruit for the seat. Some organizations suggested by Steering were the Department of Ecology, local architecture firms, the Department of Transportation, and non-profits focused on sustainability. Some recommendations from the group were John Herbstaser, a retired physician with an interest in outdoor recreation and Julie Blazek, an architect with HKP. Kristen invited members to consider other sectors where the Trust might need representation, especially as they launch the Community Health Assessment. Youth representation was suggested.

Recommendation re: Environmental Health Fee Schedule

During the November PHT meeting, Keith shared plans to increase current environmental health fees. The change in fees was being proposed as one of several strategies to increase the budget, which is in a deficit for 2025. Skagit County's fee schedule has not been updated since 2019 and is currently lower than many neighboring counties. In advance of the meeting, Trust members were given an overview of the budget and a list of fees showing the proposed increases.

Unfortunately, Keith was unable to attend the December meeting, but Kristen invited member questions and comments regarding the change. She shared that the commissioners would decide on the increase, and all aspects of the county budget, on December 9, 2024. When no questions were asked, Kristen asked the group if they were comfortable making a recommendation on the issue. Dean Snider made a motion to accept the increase in fees as presented in the documents provided by Keith. Chris Baldwin seconded the motion. In general, members felt that the fees were not excessively burdensome, and that public health worked hard to assist individuals unable to pay required fees.

2016 and 2020 CHA review discussion

As an initial step towards the 2025 CHA, Kristen shared the 2016 and 2020 CHAs with members in advance of the meeting. To better understand key themes and areas of focus for the upcoming CHA, she asked members the following questions. Their responses are below.

- **What are the common threads between the CHAs?**

Members noted many similarities between the two. A difference was that there was more of a focus on youth for the 2016 CHA. Also of note was that maternal and child health was not as prevalent on the 2020 CHA as it was in 2016, but that child care did show up in 2020.

- **What is still relevant?**

Health themes that still feel relevant are behavioral health (especially among youth) and access to care.

- **Of those areas, are there themes we should explore further?**

Members felt that homeless youth (including LGBTQ+ youth data if possible), access to care, youth health, housing and behavioral health were areas to explore further. With regards to housing and behavioral health, members noted it should be in collaboration with NorthStar. They noted that NorthStar has been most focused on crisis response and that perhaps the Trust could work in upstream, preventative strategies in response to behavioral health.

Other members stressed the importance of equity as part of the CHA and ongoing work of the Trust. There was conversation about how to best approach it. Some saw benefits to embedding equity in all themes, but others were concerned that it would make it more difficult to track progress on equity goals. Kristen reminded Trust members that with the 2020 CHA, the Trust had decided to both call it out as a separate theme AND embedded it in all the other theme areas.

Community Action's Community Needs Assessment

Sandi Phinney, Chief Strategy Officer with Community Action, joined the group to share updates from their most recent Community Needs Assessment. She shared that the organization was required to conduct the survey every three years, allowing them to better understand the needs of the community they serve. Key findings were a need for more affordable housing and shelter options, access to mental and behavioral health services, and more family sustaining jobs and affordable child care. While food security did not come up in surveys, it is still considered a priority area for Community Action. Additionally, the need for a resource hub was noted as a systems-level change that could help to address some community health challenges in accessing supportive services.

Peace Health Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA)

Kelli Baker, Community Health Coordinator with Peace Health, shared an overview of their most recent community health needs assessment. The assessment is conducted every three years and as part of the report, an implementation strategy is developed in response to the identified needs. Kelli shared key community partnerships that have been formed in response to themes of concern. Areas highlighted were housing, food security, opioid use, and mental wellness, especially among youth. She also shared creative ways Peace Health has worked to increase access to preventative care, including an example of a partnership with the Swinomish to screen more women for breast cancer.

Scorecard Review and Discussion

Stacey provided members with an updated version of the PHT Scorecard. The scorecard includes a series of health indicators tracked by the Trust to monitor the health of the community. Stacey shared areas of success in the community some of which include a decrease in the number of uninsured, an increase in the number of people getting a routine medical exam, kindergarten readiness, opioid prescription rates, rental vacancy rates, and a decrease in the teen birth rate. While there were many areas of improved health in the community, some areas of concern were related to rates of obesity, food insecurity, unsheltered students, childhood vaccines, and opioid overdose deaths. Stacey provided the group with disaggregated data where possible but cautioned the group that it often represents a small number of people in our community. She also noted that it is important to keep in mind confidentiality and the margin of error. Following the presentation, Kas engaged the group in a conversation about the scorecard to prioritize areas and themes as the group prepares for the 2025 CHA. During the meeting, members identified the following indicators/themes as areas of particular interest for the upcoming CHA.

- Access to care, especially as it related to underserved populations (SRH currently has 600 trans patients).
- Homelessness among youth (for LGBTQ youth consider data from the Trevor Project)
- Youth health- Access to care, behavioral health, housing (childhood vaccinations were specifically noted)
- Equity incorporated into the CHA (Qualitative data collection, need accountability in action and education/common language about equity)
- Renters paying 50% of income on housing (by age group)
- Preschool enrollment *upstream indicators
- Activity levels among youth and adults
- Rates of those insured
- Explore idea of a Resource Hub (mental health)
- Workforce development
- Data around credit scores and wellbeing
- Obesity rates
- Prevention and intervention for ALICE level individuals/families
- Childcare access for Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE) families
- Private school data to understand health of these students

- Add in “healthy” rates, standards, desired benchmarks, etc. when possible. Good to know what we are working towards.

Adjourn

Kristen thanked member for their time and participation. There is no PHT meeting in January, so the Trust will meet again on February 6, 2025. Steering will meet next week on Monday, December 9th.