Public Health Funding and Policy Committee Meeting

December 7th, 2022

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

Lou Kreidler, RN, BSN - Wichita Falls – Wichita County Public Health District

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

Todd Bell, MD - Potter/Randall Bi-County Health Department

Attendees:

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| Aelia Ahktar | Jennifer Smith | Moriah Hernandez |
| Amanda Ortez | Jessica R Hyde | Nicholas Ours |
| Ann Jacobo | John Villarreal | Nicole Knight |
| Angel Anco-Barrera | Joseph Ware | Noah A Chornyak |
| Becky Earlie Royer | Katherine Layman | Rachel E Sonne |
| Bradley Raines | Kathryn Kaminsky | Rafael Alberti |
| Carlos Plasencia | Karla Bautista | Ricky Garcia |
| Carrie Bradford | Karnes Cliffton | Robert Kirkpatrick |
| Christine Riley | Lacey Camp | Roberto Beaty |
| Cristina Garcia | Laura LaFuente | Razo Susie |
| Colin Crocker | Lesley Brannan | Sarah Hollister |
| Crystal Biggs | Lillian Ringsdorf | Saroj Rai |
| Dana Birnberg | Lindsay Lanagan | Shannon Richter |
| David Gruber | Lisa Steffek | Sharonica White |
| Desmar Walkes | Lucille Palenapa | Stephen Pont |
| Ele Ndukwei | Megan Wolfe | Steve Eichner |
| Emily Rocha | Micheal DeLeon | Timothy Patterson |
| Glenna Laughlin | Mohib Nawab | Tom Valentine |
| Imelda Garcia | Molly Fudell | Veronica Karam |
| Henry Suzanne | Monica Gamez | Yolanda S Cantu |
| Jennifer Shuford | Nabeel Mulla | Walquiria Sanchez |

Chair, Mr. Stephen Williams, called the meeting to order at 9:01 am and the committee members introduced themselves.

**RLHODeputy Associate Commissioner Introduction**

Mr. Williams introduced the new Deputy Associate Commissioner for the Division for Regional and Local Health Operations, Ms. Rachel Samsel. Ms. Samsel introduced herself and gave her background.

**August 31st Meeting Minutes**

Ms. Lisa Dick motioned to approve the minutes. Dr. Jennifer Griffith seconded included the suggested change. Motion approved and carried. Minutes approved.

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

Ms. Imelda Garcia updated the committee on COVID-19 vaccine administration with a slide presentation, specifically speaking on the Bi-Valent booster vaccines. Booster dose uptake is low and encouragement is needed. We do not have FDA approval for the baby doses of the Bi-Valent vaccines just yet. Once there is approval, they will be distributed to those who preorded them. Ms. Garcia continued to share specifics on the vials associated with the baby doses. Pre-ordering continues to progress for these boosters. CDC is also gearing up to move to a seasonal/annual vaccine.

Dr. Philip Huang asked if there is any sense of what the pharmacies will be doing with this information. Ms. Garcia stated that they haven’t had those discussion yet but it may becomes something similar to Flu. Dr. Huang added if there would be change with this as the Public Health Emergency Declaration expires. Ms. Garcia answered that things will begin to shift as it goes away and they are keeping eyes on it.

Ms. Kreidler asked if there is any indication on whether or not this vaccine would be included in the Adult Safety Net Program (ASN). Ms. Garcia answered yes, when the shifts occur it will be part of those programs.

Ms. Kreidler then asked about the waste that has been occuring with the Pfizer vaccine. Ms. Garcia said Moderna is anticipating a Bi-Valent single dose vial as well so that should assist.

**Update on Current Status regarding Mpox:**

Ms. Imelda Garcia updated on the status of Mpox. CDC did shift on how it was phrased creating distinction between the disease Mpox and the actual virus which is still known as Monkey Pox. Ms. Garcia then proceeded to show case reporting and regional breakdowns. V-safe has been opened up for the JYNNEOS vaccine assisting in tracking any side affects of the vaccines.

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

Dr. Cristina Garcia gave an update on the Health Disparities Grant. Dr. Garcia gave an update on the no cost extension and the Texas Public Health Fellowship program. Dr. Garcia proceeded to give an overview of the grant activities and review some of the grants efforts through her presentation. There are three new contract amendments that will be added and forecast activities through May 2024.

Ms. Kreidler asked what happened to the three health departments that were unable to renew. Dr. Garcia stated that it was due to staffing shortages. Ms. Kreidler asked what would happen to the funding for those that could not. Dr. Garcia stated that it would be evaluated and redistributed to maximize efforts.

Dr. Garcia continued describing the Fellowship program and its timeline. The presentation was finished showing a few of the success stories of this program.

**Update on Senate Bill 73 Managed Care Organization Implementation:**

Ms. Sharonica White gave an update on Senate Bill 73 implementation. The implementation of the provider type is on schedule. The vendor has researched a list of provider types submitted and is working on deciphering which types are payable. Conversations are still ongoing with DSHS when it comes to local health entity (LHE) enrollment and awareness.

Ms. Veronic Karam followed up with an update on some of the committee’spreviously asked questions using an overview presentation on the Texas Medicaid Policy. Within the presentation, Ms. Karam pointed towards the Texas Medicaid Provider Procedures Manual as the official source for policies on member benefits and services.

Mr. Williams asked who determines the provider that is associated with services. Ms. Karam answered that is largely medical boards that have jurisdiction over their liscensure. Mr. Williams asked for specifics on previous Peer Specialists. Ms. Samsel added that the legislature did pass legislation that would require Peer Specialists to be a provider type based on certification and other requirements. Ms. Leslie Smart added that should would take this back for a more clarified answer. Ms. Smart also added that all feedback and public comment on policies are welcome. The medical benefits mailbox is open for submissions.

**Update on Data Sharing Initiatives:**

Dr. Carrie Bradford updated the committee on upcoming data sharing enhancement efforts with a presentation. This update consisted of an overview of upcoming projects, timeline, and the streamlining of data sharing through the State Health Analytics and Reporting Platform (SHARP).

Ms. Kreidler asked about how LHE’s that are not involved with the initial process would be able to sign up for a memorandum of understanding (MOU). Dr. Bradford stated that they would be reaching out as the project moves forward.

Dr. Huang asked about how SHARP would work bidirectionally with other systems. Mr. Steve Eichner added that the tools in SHARP are more designed for reporting and not necessarily data importing.

Dr. Bell asked if the Amarillo Health Department should email Dr. Bradford to get intouch for this data sharing initative. Dr. Bradford answered with the data sharing mailbox link and gave other resources for information dissemination.

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

Mr. Steve Eichner presented an update regarding technology and interoperability.

DSHS is continuing to expan its capabilities within Electronic Case Reporting (eCR). The number of conditions and providers that can report data through eCR is increasing using the Association of Public Health Laboratories Informatics Messaging Services (AIMS) platform. The hope is incorporate all 144 reportable conditions for reporting in the future. DSHS has not yet declared readiness under the Federal Promoting Interoperability program. DSHS is waiting for it’s technological capabilities to be in place for a seamless process. The Immtrac2 team is continuing to work on improvements of the platform and onboarding tools to enable providers to accomplish more self-checking. Work is being done, in conjunction with a group of providers, through the Texas Health Services Authorities Interoperability Colaborative to address some issues that have emerged in looking at patient matching.

Dr. Huang asked if Immtrac2 will have more population level data, for non-COVID diseases, while it’s bidirectionality is being worked on. Mr. Eichner answered that he can take that question back, but there is work being done at the national level on that.

**Public Comment:**

No public comment at this time.

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

Mr. Williams recognized Ms. Kreidler for her service on the committee and all of the great work she has accomplished since she is retiring and resigning her position on the committee. The next meeting date is scheduled for February 8th, 2023. Mr. Alberti updated on the Call for Nominations process and it’s status. An update on the report was also given and a future agenda item discussed. A similar agenda is to be followed and Mr. Alberti will discuss it further with Mr. Williams.

**Adjourn**

Ms. Kreidler made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Lisa Dick seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Approved:

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Stephen L. Williams, Committee Chair Date