Public Health Funding and Policy Committee Meeting

October 12th, 2022

Minutes

Committee Members Attending

Stephen Williams, MEd, MPA - Houston Health Department – 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

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

Todd Bell, MD - Amarillo Health Department

Attendees:

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

Chair, Mr. Stephen Williams, called the meeting to order at 9:03 am and the committee members introduced themselves.

**August 31st Meeting Minutes**

Ms. Lisa Dick motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Rafael Alberti added a name change to the minutes. Dr. Emilie Prot seconded included the suggested change. Motion approved and carried. Minutes approved.

**Interim Commissioner of the Department of State Health Services Opening Remarks:**

Dr. Jennifer Shuford gave opening remarks on her appointment and honored the previous commissioner Dr. John William Hellerstedt.

**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 Bivalent booster vaccines. The monovalent vaccines are no longer authorized as boosters. Emergency use has been authorized as a single booster dose at least two months following primary or booster vaccination for the Bivalent vaccine. Authorization of Bivalent booster vaccines for individuals 5 years and older is anticipated over the next couple of weeks. Pre-ordering is in progress for these boosters.

**Update on Current Status regarding mpox:**

Ms. Imelda Garcia updated on the status of Monkeypox within Texas to include information on spread, demographics, and other relevant data. As of October 11, 2022, a total of 23,831 peaol have been vaccinated with JYNNEOS for mpox. Data on this was received from Immtrac2. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) Call information was distributed, giving monthly updates on information related to mpox and its status. Tecovirimat therapeutic (TPOXX) continues to be an important component to combatting mpox and resources were provided.

Dr. Todd Bell asked where would clinicians be able to access information on the TPOXX study. Ms. Garcia answered that the links provided should be able to help you navigate to the information you need.

Mr. Williams asked how does it work to enroll in TPOXX clinical trials. Ms. Garcia states that the patient’s provider would need to connect them to the website. CDC has asked that providers have that conversation with their clients if they would like to join these clinical trials.

Dr. Emilie Prot asked if there are any current patients on the 14 day course. Ms. Garcia answered yes, there are several.

**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. CDC approved our no cost extension request and the grant is now funded through May 31st, 2024. We are in the process of notifying local health entities (LHEs) and other state partners on next steps. The process will require contractors to submit a letter of intent that includes a high level summary of activites that will be completed from June 2023 to May 2024 as well as an explanation of the need for additional time to complete grant activities. This letter of intent is due Monday October 24th, 2022. We are also requiring contractors to complete an updated work plan as well as submit their success story deliverable. Support will be provided to meet these asks.

Feedback from the current Fellows and host sites has been positive. Ongoing evaluation is done to address any issues and successes. In the first quarter, most Fellows spent time learning about field and position. Fellows also completed a set number of hours of professional development and 61% of extra training. Dr. Garcia proceeded to highlight quotes from host sites on their fellowship program. We have two more informational sessions for LHEs that are interested in being host sites. One on one technical assistance is also available on request. Applications for new fellows will open in November ending in the beginning of December.

Mr. Williams spoke on the potential for collaboration with ‘My Brother’s Keeper’ activities. This was an initiative where there was a challenge to communities to address issues with boys and young men of color. There are activities related to that across Texas and it would be good to try to link some of these things together. Dr. Garcia added that this deserves a follow up conversation. Jessica Hyde would be the main point of contact for this as the Director of Public Health Partnerships. Mr. Williams also added TACCHO would be beneficial in involving various other LHEs.

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

Ms. Sharonica White gave an update on Senate Bill 73 implementation. The Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) is continuing to work with the Texas Medicaid & Healthcare Partnership (TMHP) to determine how a provider type will be entered into the system. TMHP will update the system to include the new provider type. Once the provider type is established, the LHEs would need to enroll and be credentialed by the Managed Care Organizations (MCOs). Only codes billable under Texas Medicaid will be includes. Codes that are not currently payable would need to go up through the topic nomination process. HHSC has an official process for nomination for the proposition of new services. This can be found on the HHSC Medicaid policy website. Any member of the public can request coverage of a new service or benefit. These new services will be research by a Medicaid policy analyst. The policy development process can take from 6 to 18 months depending on the topic submitted.

Ms. Denise Grogan made herself available to answer questions on how the enrollment process would work for the LHE provider type.

Mr. Williams asked a question on the requirements on the provider type. Specifically on if the issues of endemnification and 24 hour coverage were addressed. Ms. Grogan stated that she does not have visibility on those issues. Ms. White asked to submit the questions to the project mailbox. Ms. Grogan answered that the question is provided but not required to answer with a ‘Yes’.

Ms. Veronica Karam from the Office of Policy stated that their has been work on this question and some of the issues have been resolved and some have yet to be solved. An update can be provided next meeting on the questions posed. Mr. Alberti will follow up on this for the next committee meeting.

Ms. Lisa Dick asked if there is a time line on when LHEs would be able to apply. Ms. Grogan answered that it is being worked on and should be available as of the 1st of January 2023.

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

Mr. Steve Eichner presented an update regarding technology and interoperability. This morning DSHS went live with electronic case reporting within two hospitals for COVID-19. Data is being processed through National Electronic Disease Surveilllance System (NEDSS)and services will continue to expand. We are still working with other partners on the ingestion of data from the Association of Public Health Laboratories Informatics Messaging Services (AIMS) platform. At the federal level there is a task force working on certification for public health information systems and making recommendations in that space. There will not be an immediate impact and are expecting a longer time period for implementation in trying to address any issues that may emerge. In The Division for Regional and Local Health Operations at DSHS is continuing to work on a new client management information service. HHSC has launched their Interoberalility Center for Excellence and is working with DSHS on contuing to expand work on data sharing and connecting information systems. State Health Analytics and Reporting Platform (SHARP) is another project that is continuing forward.

**Discussion of PHFPC Annual Report Recommendations:**

Mr. Alberti updated on the annual report and response to the recommendations report status. Mr. Eichner also added that they are working on the technology overview and providing an up-to-date response. Mr. Alberti will send out the annual report for committee review.

**Public Comment:**

No public comment at this time.

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

The next meeting date is scheduled for December 7th. Mr. Alberti updated on the Call for Nominations on upcoming committee seats, providing awareness of which seats are within the current call. A similar agenda is to be followed and Mr. Alberti will discuss it further with Mr. Williams.

**Adjourn**

Dr. Bell 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