



**Task Force of Border Health Officials (TFBHO) Meeting
HHSC Virtual Platform
May 25, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Member Name	Yes	No	Professional Representatives (non-members)
Esmeralda Guajardo, MAHS		✓	
Richard Chamberlain, DrPH, MPH, RS	✓		
Steven M. Kotsatos, RS, CPM		✓	
Shannon Harvill	✓		
Eduardo Olivarez	✓		
Arturo Rodriguez, DNP, MPH, CPM	✓		
Hector Ocaranza, MD, MPH		✓	
Emilie Prot, DO, MPH	✓		
Lillian Ringsdorf, MD, MPH	✓		
Rachel E. Sonne, MD, MPH	✓		
State Representative Bobby Guerra		✓	Represented by Jasmine Owen
Senator Eddie Lucio Jr.		✓	

Attendees Present

Francesca Kupper, John Chacon, Karin Hopkins, John Villarreal, Jasmine Owen, Kayla Kates-Brown, Jacqueline Thompson, Tessa Buck-Ragland, Jennifer Moore, and Alberto Perez.

Agenda Item I: Call to Order, Welcome, Chair Remarks, Meeting Logistics and TFBHO Roll Call

Chair Olivarez welcomed attendees to the Task Force of Border Health Officials (TFBHO) meeting. He commenced the meeting at 1:00 pm. and asked if any legislators were in attendance. He then asked for DSHS staff to present themselves. He also congratulated Ms. Angela Mora on her retirement and announced Dr. Hector Ocaranza as her interim replacement. He also acknowledged Senator Lucio’s commitment to border public health and for authoring the bill that created the Task Force of Border Health Officials.

Chair Olivarez asked Ms. Francesca Kupper to continue with logistical announcements. After doing so, Ms. Kupper introduced the HHSC production staff and turned the meeting back to Chair Olivarez. He thanked everyone for attending and asked Ms. Kupper to proceed with the roll call; seven members were present to establish a quorum.



Agenda Item III: Update: COVID-19 Vaccines and boosters

Chair Olivarez explained that they'd move on to Agenda Item three and come back to Agenda Item two to ensure there is a quorum for the vote. He introduced Tony Aragon, Immunization Unit Director (DSHS) and Mr. David Gruber, Associate Commissioner for Regional and Local Health Operations to provide the update on COVID-19 Vaccine and boosters. Mr. Aragon started his update with news of Texas data and the recent age expansion of the vaccine (children between six months – four years). The overall state update is:

- 44.9 million vaccines administered in Texas since the launch of the vaccine
 - 21 million have received at least one dose of the vaccine
 - 17.6 million are fully vaccinated
 - 6.8 million fully vaccinated people have received at least one booster
- 78% of population vaccinated with at least one booster (most are 50+)
- 37% of population vaccinated with at least one booster

Mr. Aragon stated that Texas could improve on promoting booster doses because they do help with immunity against new variants. Focused efforts on promoting boosters to the younger population, including those aged 5-11 and those 18-35.

He also stated that it's expected for the age expansion of the vaccine to be approved next month, which will be for the ages of 6 months to 4 years of age for both Pfizer and Spikevax (formerly known as Moderna). The distribution will likely have an allocation for the first two weeks (limited supply) followed by standard ordering later (same type of scenario when the vaccine was approved for ages 5-12). He concluded his update and asked members if they had questions.

Chair Olivarez asked if there was a media effort to promote vaccinations. Mr. Aragon explained that DSHS has promoted vaccines statewide and continues with marketing efforts to promote vaccines and boosters. He also noted that there are vaccine hesitancy issues, but the agency is doing their part to provide as much information and education as possible to boost vaccine confidence.

Dr. Rodriguez commented about a local effort to work with school districts to continue to promote mask-wearing, social distancing, and vaccinations in movie theatres, since many students may be frequently visiting movie theatres during the summer. He asked if the state planned to work with local providers with such efforts, especially with certain populations that could benefit from the information.

Dr. Chamberlain also asked about a state-wide collaborative effort to ensure safety for all populations, especially regarding students going back to school in the fall. The City of Laredo is conducting a city-wide promotion and it might be beneficial to conduct this at a grander scale.



Mr. Aragon thanked them both for their respective local efforts and agreed that it would be beneficial for a grand call to action to unite everyone to focus on immunizations across the board.

Chair Olivarez reminded members of Operation Border Health Preparedness that will be held in South Texas in late July before school commences. He also gave credit to all border community efforts from El Paso to Brownsville achieving the highest vaccination levels in the state due to tremendous bilingual campaign efforts in Spanish and English Language radio and TV. He also noted the tremendous response of at events such as the vaccination successes at flea markets. He asked Dr. Prot for her input. She agreed and expressed that much outreach has taken place with great community collaboration, including schools, children's camps, and other efforts to promote the event. These and other promotional efforts will continue to vaccinations and boosters.

Chair Olivarez invited Mr. Gruber to share any remarks on the topic. Mr. Gruber also wanted to highlight that pharmacies have been great vaccination partners. He also noted that it wasn't just the large box stores but the federally qualified health clinics, and single mom-and-pop pharmacies that reach rural areas. Chair Olivarez and Mr. Aragon agreed that they were very important partners that led to border success. Members also spoke of supplemental support to gain provider participation and the continued promotion of vaccines and boosters as well as working with schools and the Texas Education Agency.

Agenda Item II: Consideration of March 31, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Chair Olivarez asked Ms. Kupper if he could return to Agenda Item two. She explained that he could continue and ask members to review the May 25, 2022 Meeting Minutes and ask for motions to approve the minutes, followed by a roll call vote. He asked members to review the minutes and asked if anyone had corrections or updates. He continued by requesting a motion to approve the draft meeting minutes. Dr. Richard Chamberlain provided the first motion to approve the minutes while Dr. Prot seconded the motion. Chair Olivarez asked Ms. Kupper to initiate a roll call vote to approve the meeting minutes. The motion carried and the minutes were approved. She turned the meeting back to Chair Olivarez.

Agenda Item IV: Presentation: State Health Analytics and Reporting Platform (SHARP) overview

Chair Olivarez introduced Dr. Carrie Bradford, Data Governance Director, DSHS. She provided a presentation on the collection of tools and technologies which enable SHARP, as a platform, to increase efficiencies among different data reporting tools. She provided details about the pilot project and the goal of the program. She also expressed that SHARP doesn't replace data storage systems but is a platform to join them but clarified that it's not considered a Health Information Exchange database. Chair Olivarez asked if members had questions for her and thanked Dr. Bradford for her presentation.



Break

Chair Olivarez announced that they would take a break at 2:08 p.m. for 10 minutes. Chair Olivarez re-convened the meeting at 2:21 p.m. Ms. Kupper initiated a roll call to ensure a quorum was still in place. Ms. Kupper confirmed a quorum and Chair Olivarez continued with the meeting.

Agenda Item V: Subcommittees Recommendation Updates

Chair Olivarez opened this agenda item and started with an update from Dr. Rodriguez who leads the Public Health Infrastructure Subcommittee.

Dr. Rodriguez stated that he had short-term recommendations, including one having to do with what have been historically known as binational health councils. He also stated that he'd forward this recommendation along with an update to the HIE recommendation.

Chair Olivarez also referenced the importance of binational communication and collaboration post pandemic. Dr. Prot also referenced how important sustaining relationships with Mexican counterparts is. She also noted that reinforcing the surveillance of diseases. Drs. Rodriguez and Chamberlain also mentioned their binational relationships with their sister communities. Environmental and zoonotic concerns were also raised as well as the upcoming binational conference in Laredo. Dr. Prot also credited the Office of Border Public Health's support of binational community health coalitions and mentioned that bringing new partnerships would be a good addition to the short-term recommendation.

Chair Olivarez continued by asking Dr. Prot to report on the Chronic Disease Recommendation. She added language, including three sub bullets (below) regarding early intervention components of children's obesity and prevention in Texas.

- Utilize the DSHS website to share and make data available to the public on obesity in Texas and along the border highlighting data by age and county.
- Using DSHS Office of Border Public Health's CHW training center to provide support, promote education on the topic of obesity along border communities and how to prevent morbidity and mortality related to obesity.
- Promote communication on healthy habits, behaviors and prevention messages in Spanish and English along border counties with targeted messages for audience intended (children, parents, health care team).

Dr. Prot asked if members had any comments on her update. Chair Olivarez thanked her and Dr. Ringsdorf for her leadership of the Maternal Child Health Subcommittee. He let members know that the subcommittee will be assigning a new leader to that subcommittee. Dr. Ringsdorf spoke of the agency moving forward with great potential for collaboration to continue promoting Maternal Child Health issues along the Texas border.

Chair Olivarez asked about the recommendations report timeline. Mr. Villarreal confirmed that they were on schedule and asked members to share new recommendations final



language with all members to ensure everyone had the opportunity to review the language, so they'd be prepared to vote to approve them at their next meeting on July 7th. Ms. Hopkins advised of members decided on whether each recommendation is a short or long-term recommendation.

Chair Olivarez and Dr. Rodriguez also commented on academic partnerships as success stories. Mr. Villarreal asked members to review the success stories, since that will be submitted as an appendix within the recommendations report.

Agenda Item VI: Public comment

Chair Olivarez asked Ms. Kupper if any public comments were submitted. She confirmed that no public comments were submitted.

Agenda Item VII: Closing remarks, thank you and adjourn

Chair Olivarez thanked all members for attending the meeting. He asked members and all attendees if there were any last remarks before closing the meeting. He adjourned the meeting at 2:56 p.m. and the production staff announced they ended the recording.