

DOH COVID-19 Vaccine Implementation Collaborative Minutes:

July 6, 2022 | 4:00pm – 5:30pm

I. Welcome & Land Acknowledgment – Chauné Fitzgerald, Thought Partner

- This session was facilitated by Chauné Fitzgerald, who is the executive director of Women of Wisdom (WOW) Tri-Cities. Learn more about WOW Tri-Cities here: <https://wowtricity.com/>

II. Vaccine Updates (6mo-4yo; general updates) - Bethany Laird, Vaccine Planning and Response Team

- As of June 13th, 82.3% of the population aged 5 and up has received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine in Washington. 74.8% is fully vaccinated.
- Booster doses are now recommended for everyone ages 5 and older. DOH is working to make booster doses accessible for children in Washington since the eligibility was expanded to include them.
- DOH anticipates a variant-specific booster in the fall, which will lead to a seasonal booster campaign to get people vaccinated against the dominant variant that is circulating.
 - i. This is probably also when people will become eligible for a second booster if they are not already eligible. *Note: This information is not confirmed or finalized. WA DOH decisions will depend on CDC and FDA approval.*
 - ii. Even if you have recently been infected with COVID-19, you are able to get a booster as soon as your isolation period has ended .
- Novavax is a new COVID-19 vaccine presentation that is protein-based. Rather than an mRNA vaccine, it's protein-based, which is like most vaccines that we received in our childhood vaccine series.
 - i. It has been recommended for emergency use for adults, but it has not been approved by the FDA.
 - ii. It is anticipated that it will be approved and distributed in the upcoming months, potentially as early as late July, so DOH is planning for limited quantities to be available in Washington.
- On DOH's [COVID-19 vaccine locator](#) website, you can search for vaccination locations in Washington.
 - i. There is a search option that helps you find clinics according to age group. For example, if you wanted to find a clinic that is offering vaccines for an 8-month-old child, you can specify that in your search.

- The Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are authorized and available for kids aged 6 months and older at no cost in Washington State.
 - i. The health risks if children are infected with COVID-19 are much higher than the risk of vaccine side effects.
 - ii. Even if your child already had COVID-19, they should still get vaccinated. The vaccine provides additional immunity and helps protect against reinfection.
 - iii. There are two presentations for children 6 months – 5 years old: For children 6 months to 4 years old, they're eligible for Pfizer and Moderna; If they are 5 years old, they will have a two-dose primary series of the Pfizer vaccine rather than three.
 - iv. If your child turns 5 within the middle of their vaccine dose, clinics can provide guidance on what vaccine they should receive.
- DOH's current priority is to continue to promote low-barrier access points for children at higher risk of severe disease (those with disabilities and special healthcare needs).
 - i. There are many pediatric clinics throughout the state that are offering the vaccine, as well as pharmacies, so DOH sent out a letter to pharmacists encouraging them to also provide the vaccine for this age group.
- DOH has separate messages for providers and the public.
 - i. The public-facing messages focus on how vaccines are safe, effective, and available for the new age group. Messages will be available in over 37 languages via social media, flyers, and community promotion.
 - ii. The provider-facing messages focus on clinical guidance, toolkits, peer-to-peer education, and webinars.
- Resources shared by Bethany:
 - i. [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#)
 - ii. [DOH Pediatric COVID-19 Vaccine Toolkit](#)
 1. This includes a flyer of what parents should know as well as FAQs and a discussion guide.
 - iii. [Vaccinating Youth](#)
 1. This page has up-to-date information for the public on how to access the vaccine as well as an FAQ.
 - iv. [Sign up for the COVID-19 Vaccine Partner Newsletter](#)
 1. This is a weekly newsletter sent out on Fridays and includes information updates and resources from the COVID-19 vaccine team at DOH.
 - v. [COVID-19 Resources and Recommendations](#)

vi. [Care-a-Van](#)

1. Mobile vaccination team that can reach many different locations to provide vaccines to community members. Community partners can submit requests for it to visit their community.
 2. Most of these clinics will have \$50 gift cards for people getting their first or second dose.
- For questions about this presentation or regarding the COVID-19 Vaccine Planning and Response, please contact Bethany Laird at bethany.laird@doh.wa.gov.

III. COVID-19 Therapeutics/Treatment - Ezra Stark, Medical Countermeasures Team (MCM)

- For a detailed slide deck, please see [here](#).
- The end goal of DOH's distribution, education, and outreach plan is to make therapeutics and treatments available to all Washingtonians, regardless of where they live.
- There are currently over 1,000 active providers that are offering therapeutics at clinics, pharmacies, hospitals, urgent care centers, and a variety of other locations. There have been over 200,000 therapeutic courses distributed in Washington to date.
- Washington state has over 50,000 therapeutic courses on hand. These include:
 - i. Evusheld, a pre-exposure prophylaxis used for the prevention of COVID-19 for immunocompromised individuals.
 - ii. Bebtelovimab, an IV-administered monoclonal antibody injection for people at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
 - iii. Legevirio (molnupiravir) and Paxlovid, oral antivirals used to reduce the risk of hospitalization if taken within five days of symptom onset.
- VEKLURY (remdesivir) is an FDA approved IV antiviral that is not currently distributed by DOH.
- Certain variants have caused DOH to shift their authorized monoclonal antibody treatment. Before 2022, Regen-Cov and Bebtelovimab were the frontline treatments. But when the Omicron wave hit Washington, DOH shifted wholly to the current treatment, Bebtelovimab.
- Because oral antivirals can reduce the likelihood of hospitalization, they have, as of late, been a major tool to keep hospitals from reaching capacity. This is especially because oral antivirals are to be dispensed outside of the hospital and taken by the patient at home.
 - i. There has been an inverse relationship between the state's inventory of oral antivirals and 7-day hospitalization numbers. This

means that as the availability of oral antivirals increased, the number of hospitalizations went down.

- Paxlovid was recently approved by the FDA to be prescribed by pharmacists.
 - i. Up to this point, patients had to go to a provider to get it prescribed, then go to a specific pharmacy that had it in stock. This would sometimes prevent people from accessing it within the required five-day window
 - ii. This approval will increase access, especially in parts of rural Washington.
- FQHCs (Federally Qualified Health Centers) have been vital partners for the availability of therapeutics specifically for uninsured individuals.
 - i. Previously there was HRSA (Health Resources and Services Administration) funding available for testing, treatment, and vaccines, but it expired at the end of March. FQHCs have stepped into that gap and made those COVID-19 medical resources available at their locations.
- For people to receive treatment within the five-day window, there is a need for quick test results and then a way to bridge the gap from people with positive test results to a provider who can evaluate them and prescribe treatment if needed.
 - i. The Test to Treat program is one way to bridge that gap since it provides end-to-end testing, linkage to a healthcare provider visit, and dispensing of medication available on-site.
- Test to Treat locations are currently very limited, so DOH is starting to work with pharmacies to provide testing supplies. This will allow them to administer the test free of charge and then prescribe the oral antivirals as appropriate all at one location.
- Telehealth may also be an option for people who are not able to access a provider within 48 hours of the onset of symptoms or who do not have insurance. DOH is working with Bird's Eye Medical and Color Health to provide these services.
 - i. Bird's Eye Medical can also work with community-based organizations to supply at-home test along with an attached message that directs patients to the Test to Treat program.
- All retail pharmacies (Walgreens, Walmart, etc.) can provide oral antivirals already, but DOH is working with independent pharmacies to provide rapid antigen tests for free. These would direct people to the Test to Treat program, like the test kits provided by Bird's Eye Medical.
 - i. Any independent pharmacy can request to receive oral antivirals from DOH.

- The Test to Treat hotline has interpretation services available and the therapeutics site is in the process of being translated into 40 different languages.
- Individuals can call 1-800-525-0127 and press # to speak to a hotline operator to assist with setting up an appointment and determining eligibility for certain medications.
- For questions about this presentation, please email the Medical Countermeasures Team at mcm@doh.wa.gov.
- Links shared by Ezra
 - i. [WA FoWArd plan](#)
 - ii. [Therapeutics Information for Health Care Providers](#)
 - iii. [COVID-19 Therapeutics Fact Sheets and Guidance](#)
 - iv. [COVID-19 Treatments](#)

IV. Collaborative Transition – Naisha Williams, Community Relations and Equity Director, Center for Public Affairs, WA DOH

- The Collaborative would like to continue to address COVID-19, but also explore ways to address social determinants of health as a Collaborative.
- Health disparities existed prior to COVID-19, and they have been amplified during the pandemic.
- DOH welcomes the Collaborative's thought partnership in the upcoming weeks to help identify ways that we can work to address both COVID-19 and social determinants of health in communities across Washington State.
- Please look forward to follow-up communication after this meeting for next steps in shaping the future of the Collaborative space.

V. DOH After Action Review – Amber McPherson and Rosalinda Turk, Emergency Preparedness & Resiliency Response

- For a detailed slide deck, please see [here](#).
- After Action Reviews (AARs) are very standard practice across numerous sectors, including public health. They identify best practices, gaps in the response, and lessons learned after an emergency or exercise.
- DOH is working on an AAR currently about how they responded to the COVID-19 pandemic through June 2022. DOH is also considering a second AAR for the COVID-19 pandemic.
- DOH's approach to the AAR is different from other AARs because they are incorporating equity at every level, from their research approach to data analysis.
 - i. In order to do this, DOH conducted extensive research on how COVID-19 affected communities worldwide and what approaches local governments took. From this, they found the most successful

practices in responding to COVID-19 and compared them to what DOH did.

- DOH created a pandemic response inventory tool. This lists the pandemic response project, its goals, an equity assessment, and responses to survey questions intended to measure project success.
- This project's intention is to determine how successful DOH's efforts were in reaching communities that were disproportionately affected by COVID-19, but it also recognizes that it is not enough to help people bounce back from a pandemic.
 - i. If they capture the data they need and ask the right questions, they can create a report that will help guide evidence-informed decisions and recommendations.
- The AAR survey will roll out in mid-July with optional participation. The survey will be focused on community members, so they will be leaning on community groups and organizations to help distribute them and promote responses.
 - i. Essentially, the more responses they receive, the clearer the picture they will be able to develop in the report and the clearer the focus on what DOH can do to support during future pandemics.
 - ii. The survey will be shared with Collaborative partners in follow-up communication after this meeting.
- If you have questions about this presentation, please contact Amber at Amber.McPherson@doh.wa.gov or Rosalinda at Rosalinda.Turk@doh.wa.gov.

VI. Closing Remarks

- If you would like to connect with the Collaborative team, please email Vax.Collaborative@doh.wa.gov.