

Whitman County Board of Health Meeting Minutes

The Whitman County Board of Health met Monday, March 17, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. Arthur D Swannack, Chairman, Tom Handy, Chad Whetzel, Craig VanTine, Katie Johnson and Corey Mitzimberg, Clerk of the Board in attendance. Kara Bates was absent.

Attendance: Meghan Johns, Brad Bowman, Chris Skidmore

3:00 pm. Convened the Board of Health Meeting

1. District 3 Commissioner Chad Whetzel was introduced.
2. Craig Van Tine moved, Tom Handy seconded to approve the January 21, 2025, minutes.
3. Public Comment – There was no public comment.
4. Opioid Abatement Council - presented by: Meghan Johns

The Public Health Department Director, Chris Skidmore, shared updates on the following.

5. Community Health update:

Communicable disease

- The Pertussis outbreak is still active, with approximately one case every few weeks.
 - Six weeks without a case would declare the outbreak over.
 - 92 cases have been reported since the beginning of the outbreak.
- Influenza/RSV activity levels continue to be high in the County
 - Cases are starting to come down statewide and locally.
- COVID: Activity is currently low both locally and statewide.
 - Expectations for a surge in the Spring/early Summer based on past trends.
- Hantavirus update: Since notifiable conditions were required to be reported one case has been reported in the county. The individual passed away.
 - Family Education and guidance is being provided for safe clean up around property.
- Measles protocols and procedures have been reviewed by Health Department staff should a case be reported in Whitman County.
 - Multiple outbreaks have been reported in 12 different states with about 93% of the cases being outbreak related. Approximately 17% of those infected have been hospitalized with 2 confirmed deaths.
- The Whitman County Health Department was nominated for a TB Elimination Champion Award by the Washington State Department of Health and named a 2025 CDC TB Elimination Champion along with CHAS Health for 2025.
 - In 2024 Whitman County received the first diagnosed XDR TB case in Washington State history. Clinical Supervisor Jamie Peters spearheaded the treatment and case investigation, a 10-month ordeal that involved providing daily observational therapy, trips to the doctor's office, and other services.
 - Whitman County Health Department and Chas are featured on the CDC's 2025 TB Elimination Champion page. <https://www.cdc.gov/world-tb-day/us-champions/2025.html>
- Clinical Services
 - All clinics are very busy.
- Harm Reduction
 - Naloxone rescue kits are being dispersed, Pullman agencies and locations that will benefit from kits are being identified.
 - Two state-funded wall-mounted naloxone kiosks with naloxone to stock the kiosks have been ordered. Installations will be at the new Whitman Recovery Community Center and Palouse River Counseling.
- Assessment Work

- The 2024 Impact Report and 2024 Annual Health Summary were mailed in February to all county residents.
 - The impact report gives a breakdown of the services that were provided in 2024 along with some of the tracked metrics.
 - The Annual Health Summary is an aggregate of health-related data for Whitman County and tracks progress regarding the 2030 Healthy People Targets.
 - *2030 Health People is a federal initiative that sets data-driven national objectives to improve health and well-being over the next decade.*
- Lactation Pods will be available at the 2025 Palouse County Fair.
 - Lactation pods offer privacy for new moms. The hope is, the pods will be used during the Fair and other events held at the fairgrounds.
 - Fair goers have asked about lactation facilities, many moms have been using port-a-potties to meet this need.

6. Personal and Family update:

- WIC
 - The Health Department open WIC position was filled through promotion of office specialist, Geneva Leresche. With the department being fully staffed, two additional WIC certifiers are in training. Once trained the Pullman office will have a primary certifier and there will be a backup for both offices.
 - When all training is completed creating a full WIC Clinic, caseloads sent to Spokane will be for assistance/support will be returned to Whitman County.
- Safe Kids
 - Outreach has started for the May Car Seat training to area fire departments and social service agencies with the hope to expand the car seat efforts in towns outside of Pullman.
 - Work has begun with community pools to start planning the 2025 Swimming Lesson Program.
 - In 2024 the partnership with rural community pools and Pullman Parks and Rec resulted in 312 children from low-income families receiving swimming lessons.
 - The Safe Kids contract has been amended, now an additional \$8000 will be received, which will be used for swimming lessons and the purchase bike helmets.
 - There is an anticipation the State will have additional funds next year and will add new life jacket stands or repair existing ones.
- Mental Health
 - Free QPR (Question. Persuade. Refer.) suicide prevention courses will be offered to Whitman County agencies, employers, and the public, by the end of spring.
 - County Departments can also be scheduled for training.
 - QPR is a suicide prevention training and takes about an hour to an hour and a half to complete.
 - The Disconnect to Reconnect campaign has begun, with this year's theme being "Life Beyond Likes: Exploring what it means to find joy and fulfillment outside of social media validation."
 - The campaign is in partnership with Whitman County Rural Libraries and intended for our rural communities' students.

7. Environmental Health update:

- Facilities permitting in 2025, has been completed.
- Inspection of food establishments has begun.
- Requests for septic work with the weather getting better are being received.
- Training courses and continuing education opportunities in the areas of water recreation and solid waste enforcement have been attended by Health Department staff. Additional training opportunities for septic and drinking water are anticipated late spring/early summer.

8. Admin/HIPAA update
 - Maritza Miramontes has been hired for Pullman front office specialist position, starting today.
 - Maritza formerly worked in Idaho's Public Health system and should be familiar with the offered programs.
 - The architect sent an email regarding the Colfax remodel, sharing a plan will be submitted with the scope of work within the next 2 days. Facilities will review the scope of work then be sent to the Whitman County Commissioners to review.
 - Chris Skidmore shared letters he sent the WA State three State Representatives highlighting the importance of WA Foundation Public Health Services (FPHS) funding in keeping our eastern Washington communities safe.
9. The upcoming 2025 Board of Health meeting dates were reviewed, with the next meeting being held Monday, May 19, 2025, followed by.
 - July 21, 2025
 - September 15, 2025
 - November 17, 2025
10. Adjourn

Next Board of Health Meeting: Monday, May 19, 2025

Dated this 19th day of May 2025



Corey Mitzimberg
Clerk of the Board



Arthur D Swannack, Chairman
Whitman County Board of Health