

**Monday, November 20, 2023**

**Attendees;**

Commissioner Largent, Chairman, Commissioner Handy, Commissioner Swannack, Craig VanTine, Community Stakeholder, Kara Bates, representing Public Health, Health Care Facilities and Providers, Chris Skidmore-Public Health Director, Meghan Johns, Corrine McMichael-Deputy Director (virtually), Mike Berney, Executive Director of Palouse River Counseling & GCBH (virtually) and Dr. Brad Bowman (virtually), Cassie Heimgartner-CHAS Senior Director of Operations, Kelley Charvet-CHAS Chief Administrative Officer, Marcus Riccelli-CHAS Community Relations Manager, Mary Miller, CHAS Public Policy Specialist and Mitch Swanger-Community Engagement Specialist.

**Meeting convened at 3:00 p.m.**

1. Minutes were approved

1a. Commissioner Largent shared the County has Opioid Abatement funds, approximately \$60,000.00 and would like to start using these funds for the Opioid Abatement Plan. He introduced Mike Berney, Executive Director of Palouse River Counseling and the Greater Columbia Behavioral Health to share some insight regarding the opioid epidemic and the use and distribution of Narcan and naloxone. Currently he is working with the Opioid Abatement Council gathering information for the Whitman County Opioid Abatement Plan to present to the Attorney General's Office. The Attorney General's Office must review and authorize the funds to be used. Mr. Berney has reached out to the City of Pullman, Whitman County Department of Health and checked with both hospitals to see their preferences on use of the funds. The hospitals do not have a preference, they do not see many patients with Opioid withdrawals. The general consensus is the funds are used to purchase Narcan or naloxone. He has spoken with WSU and they have plans in place to deal with opioid overdoses. Mr. Berney would like to get a recommendation from the Board of Health and Board of County Commissioners to move forward with a plan and to, if interested, work with the Department of Health to create a plan.

Commissioner Swannack moved, Commissioner Handy seconded and it was carried for the Board of Health supporting the Whitman County Board of Commissioners authorizing the use of the opioid settlement funds up to \$60,000.00 for opioid reversal medication purchases.

Commissioner Largent stressed to the audience if anyone hears or is aware of another way to help the community with the use of these funds to please bring it the Board of Health.

2. Cassie Heimgartner, Senior Director of the CHAS clinic shared the clinic is a Community Health Center stating;

- no patients are turned away regardless of lack of insurance or ability to pay
- the history of the clinic
- the services are provided, medical, dental, pharmacy, urgent care and behavioral health services
- CHAS serves several communities with traditional brick and mortar offices, telehealth, school based services and mobile clinics.

Additional information about the clinics was shared noting all information is available on their website at [www.chas.org](http://www.chas.org) as well as the clinic locations.

Corrine McMichael, Deputy Director shared a community data sheet regarding access to healthcare.

Public Health Director Chris Skidmore share the following information;

3. The 2024 Public and Environmental Health Fee Schedules will be voted on January 16, 2024

4. Community Health

- COVID
  - Cases are trending downwards across the state however a spike is expected during and/or after the holidays with travel and gatherings
  - Influenza cases have died down with the use of vaccine clinics offered however there is an expectation cases will increase after the holidays
  - RSV emergency room visits are trending up on the west side of the state and expects an increase on the east side as well. RSV vaccine is limited as the supply is not meeting the demand. RSV mainly affects small children and adults over 65

- School and Long Term Care (LTC) facility clinics for COVID and Flu vaccines have been successful, with all schools and LTC facilities being visited
- The Palouse Resource Guide has been updated, links are being shared in the communities and added to local websites to help drive people to the guide

5. Personal Family Health

- Palouse Resource guide is Safe Kids
  - Safe Kids Program was very successful in 2023 and the report will be available in the first part of 2024
  - Plan is to have another car seat technician for rural areas
  - Childcare consulting services will begin soon with nurse, Malissa McCabe has completed training.
- Clinical Services
  - The Clinics continue to see increased numbers at weekly clinics for vaccines.
- WIC
  - WIC clinics are being run in person in the Pullman and Colfax offices. The Colfax office WIC area has recently been remodeled and turned out great.

6. Environmental Health

- The Environmental Health staff have been to two classes recently, one on soil and septic and the other to train with Spokane Food Inspectors
- Alga bloom is still testing as toxic, it is all dead but still toxic. Signs are still posted and the Department of Ecology will continue to test as requested. The bloom has moved down river.
- Local water and food inspections are being completed, the report will be available soon

7. Admin

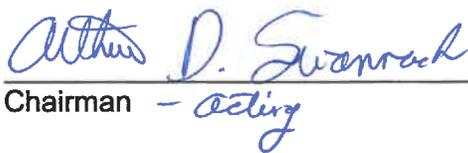
- Shelby Bafus was hired in November and is focusing on communicable disease investigations and as a backup in clinical services.
- Outside contractors performed HIPAA risk assessments on various departments that handle PHI. Chris Skidmore plans to share assessments with departments in January 2024. He is also working with the IT department on a new risk assessment tool.

Commissioner Swannack shared Ag organizations have reported there are concerns with water wells and farm housed workers. Chris Skidmore shared he is aware of this and is currently working with a farm now. He shared L&I and OSHA have been reviewing farms regarding water supplied to farm workers housed on the farm site. The requirements include proof of potable water and/or adding a domestic well. Chris will keep the Board up to date on details as he learns them.

**2024 Meetings**

January 16, 2024	July 15, 2024
March 18, 2024	September 16, 2024
May 20, 2024	November 18, 2024

  
 Corey Mitzimberg, Clerk of the Board

  
 Chairman - acting

# COMMUNITY DATA

## Access to Healthcare



Whitman County  
Public Health

*Whitman County is considered a Health Professional Shortage Area for Mental Health, Primary Care, and Dental Health (HRSA Data).*

Number of providers per 10,000 people, NPPES 7/10/2023				
Specialist	Whitman County	Pullman	Non-Pullman	Washington State
Psych/Mental Health	6.2	8.5	1.3	14.7
Pediatrician	1.2	1.8	0	3.8
Addiction	0	0	0	2.2

Definitions: Psych/Mental Health – Psychologist, physician, PMHNP, or clinical nurse specialist with specialty/subspecialty in mental health/psychiatrics. Pediatrician – Physician or NP with pediatrics specialty. Addiction – any provider with addiction as a specialty (could include physicians or psychologists with training in another field (e.g., preventive medicine) but with a specialty in addiction medicine)

Indicator	Whitman County	Washington State
Ratio of population to dentists, BRFSS 2020	2,480:1	1,200:1
Population to provider ratio -Mental Health Providers, CMS 2021	600:1	230:1
Proportion of adults reporting not seeing a health care provider in the last 12 months due to cost, BRFSS 2020	11.3%	9.2%

### New Data:

As of this week, primary care clinics in Whitman County are ranging between "not accepting any new patients at this time" and "able to schedule new patient appointments at the end of September". An extended waiting time is being seen by current patients that need to get in. This statement excludes SEL Health Clinic and CHS that have member restrictions for services.

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HEALTHIER  
COMMUNITY.**



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