



## BOARD OF HEALTH

The Thurston County Board of Health has responsibility  
and authority for public health in both incorporated  
and unincorporated areas of the County.

### Minutes for July 14, 2020

#### 1) Call Meeting to Order

Chair Tye Menser opened the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

##### **In Attendance:**

Tye Menser, Chair; John Hutchings, Vice Chair; Gary Edwards, Commissioner; Ramiro Chavez, County Manager; Dr. Dimyana Abdemalek, Health Officer; Schelli Slaughter, Public Health and Social Services Department Director; and Lydia Hodgkinson, Clerk of the Board of Health.

##### **Approval of Agenda:**

Vice Chair Hutchings moved to approve the meeting agenda. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously. The motion carried.

##### **Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

Vice Chair Hutchings moved to approve the meeting minutes from February 11, 2020, March 10, 2020 and the emergency meeting on March 12, 2020. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously. The motion carried.

#### 2) Presentation

##### **Introduction of the New Thurston County Health Officer – Dr. Dimyana Abdemalek**

Schelli Slaughter introduced Dr. Abdemalek and read her biography – Dr. Abdemalek is an Emergency Physician with a passion for public health. As a college student at the University of California at Berkeley she studied integrative biology and history and spent a year in Cairo where she became interested in public health interventions for schistosomiasis. She continued her interest in public health as medical student at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in Bronx, New York where she was on the board of the free clinic and spent time contributing to public health in Ethiopia. She attended Emergency Medicine Residency at Washington University in Saint Louis in Missouri where she continued her work in Ethiopia teaching clinical providers procedural techniques using resource appropriate simulation. As a Global Emergency Medicine Training Fellow at Case Western University in Cleveland, Ohio she worked with International Medical Corps on creating minimum standards for refugee clinics in the Middle East and earned a Master in Public Health. For the past three years, prior to joining PHSS, she has worked as an Emergency Physician at Kaiser Permanente Redwood City Medical Center in California where she has for a year and half led the HEDSUP group which uses a multidisciplinary approach to connect patients with complex medical and social needs with resources including primary care, psychiatry, patient care coordination and intensive case management.

Dr. Abdemalek addressed the Board thanking them for the opportunity and the positive experience. She looks forward to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic while working with the great Public Health

and Social Services (PHSS) staff to keep Thurston County safe and healthy. The Board members welcomed Dr. Abdemalek and thanked her for her pleasant presence and positive attitude.

County Manager Ramiro Chavez also welcomed Dr. Abdelmalek. He noted an in-person meeting with her and the Commissioners will be scheduled as soon as possible; and noted he is meeting with her on Friday, July 17<sup>th</sup>, to review county government.

Chair Menser provided the phone number for public attendance via conference call – (360) 252-9020, PIN 1234

**3) Opportunity for the Public to Address the Board of Health – none**

**4) Consent Item(s)**

**Vice Chair Hutchings moved to accept Consent Item “a”. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously. The motion carried.**

a) **Description:** Acceptance of Work Session notes for Agenda Settings and Briefings

**Contact:** Lydia Hodgkinson, Administrative Assistant II

**Action:** Move to accept special meeting, agenda setting, work session notes from June 4, 2019; June 11, 2019; August 6, 2019; August 13, 2019; September 3, 2019; September 10, 2019; October 1, 2019; and October 8, 2019. Move to accept regular meeting, agenda setting, work session notes from October 29, 2019; November 5, 2019; December 3, 2019; December 10, 2019; January 7, 2020; January 14, 2020; January 28, 2020; February 4, 2020; February 11, 2020; March 3, 2020; and March 10, 2020. Move to accept special meeting work session notes for Briefings on July 17, 2019 10:00 a.m.; July 17, 2019 10:40 a.m.; December 11, 2019; February 26, 2019; and March 4, 2020.

**5) Integrated Pest Management Prescriptions Blue Lake Variable Leaf Milfoil and European Coltsfoot**

Paula Cracknell, Aquatic Resource Specialist; Michael Murphy, Noxious Weed Specialist II, both from Thurston County Public Works; and Patrick Soderberg, a PHSS Hazardous Waste Specialist III and the Thurston County Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program Coordinator; were all in attendance to present to the Board. Ms. Cracknell explained this is a request to approve Integrated Pest Management prescriptions for Blue Lake Variable Leaf Milfoil and European Coltsfoot.

**Blue Lake Variable Leaf Milfoil (VLM):** VLM is a Class A noxious weed that is found in limited areas in Washington State. Class A noxious weeds are mandated for control by the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board to stop the spread of the plant before populations can escape from their limited distribution and become too widespread and difficult to manage. Since the plant was genetically confirmed in Blue Lake in 2008, various methods for removal were attempted. VLM is difficult to eradicate and a new herbicide is recommended to include in the Thurston County approved herbicide list for control of VLM in Blue Lake. The herbicide is ProcellaCOR and it has proven success with controlling VLM in other lake systems and a lower toxicological risk profile compared to other herbicides that are used to control VLM. In 2020 Thurston County was awarded a grant by the Washington State Department of Ecology to treat Blue Lake

with ProcellaCOR to try and eradicate the plant population and prevent its spread into neighboring aquatic systems. The IPM prescription is needed to implement control of VLM in Blue Lake.

European Coltsfoot: In 2019 European Coltsfoot was found in Thurston County for the first time near the Skookumchuck River. In 2018 European Coltsfoot was designated as a Class B noxious weed and containment of this plant to prevent its spread is the goal of the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board. In Thurston County European Coltsfoot is designated for control in all areas of the county. The IPM prescription is needed to implement control of European Coltsfoot in Thurston County.

Ms. Cracknell noted it is mandated by the State of Washington to treat VLM; European Coltsfoot is a new prescription; both prescriptions are approved by the State of Washington. She then provided a background of the Pest and Vegetation Management Advisory Committee.

**Vice Chair Hutchings moved to approve the Integrated Pest Management prescriptions for Blue Lake Variable Leaf Milfoil and European Coltsfoot. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously. The motion carried.**

The Board thanked Ms. Cracknell, Mr. Murphy and Mr. Soderberg.

## **6) COVID-19 Update**

Ms. Slaughter provided an update on COVID-19 noting this is the first opportunity to share the information with the Board during a regular Board of Health meeting. She shared and discussed the following:

- State-wide and Thurston County current numbers of positive cases, deaths, hospitalized, and recovery.
- Status of local hospitals to treat COVID-19 patients, ICU beds, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Status of testing – tests administered, percentage of positive tests.
- Partnerships – partnerships have been developed with Providence for drive up testing; Valleyview Health; PHSS pop-up testing; and many other community partners.
- Testing lab results – need to improve and expand
- Safe reopening for Phase 3 – technical assistance around compliance and safety is available to the public
- PHSS department work has been focused mainly on COVID-19

Dr. Abdemalek provided additional information:

- Youth and children: there have been a rise in positive cases for youth and children; we have learned that children can become very sick; reminded that over-all risk to these ages is low but not zero.
- Reminder for those tested – if no symptoms, still stay home (isolate); if positive, 10 days isolation.
- Isolation/Quarantine: Isolate – from members of home; Quarantine- stay home
- COVID-19 survivors: working hard with case tracers to contact COVID-19 survivors

Dr. Abdemalek and Ms. Slaughter provided clarification and addressed the Board members' questions on the following:

- Has the most vulnerable age changed from over 40? There has been a significant change in the most vulnerable age bracket with the state-wide percentage rising for ages 20-29.

- Are hospital beds and PPE availability still adequate? Yes, they are at 20% surge capacity; 80% with non-COVID-19; hospitals are very full due to the public catching up on non-COVID-19 medical procedures; frequent communication with hospitals is happening to keep on top of capacity information.
- JBLM soldiers testing positive that live off base, where do they isolate? We have a good relationship with JBLM; the standard isolation/quarantine, and contact tracing protocols are in place at Madigan as well as local hospitals; Madigan cases are monitored via the State-wide tracking system.
- Five deaths had underlying conditions, which COVID-19 positive cases that were hospitalized have underlying conditions? 100% of current 39 patients hospitalized.
- Discussion ensued regarding average stay of hospital patients for those on ventilators and not; level of symptoms in general; and positive cases contracted from family members.
- Contact tracers – requirement is for 45 tracers, where do we stand? In Phase 3, a sufficient number of tracers to meet demand is required; Thurston is required to have 43.5; we now have 45 trained and ready to go. Discussion ensued regarding other positions such as Case Investigators which have been recruited also. Ms. Slaughter noted as we move into Fall, we will need more staff. Contract tracing functions 7 days a week; some staff work out of the Lilly Road building, some work remotely; an application called SARA is used by tracers. We will need additional space -the current staff at the Lilly Road building need social distancing accommodations for their work spaces.
- Volunteers – if volunteers stop volunteering will it be a hardship? Yes, some volunteers have returned to work as we entered into Phase 3; remaining volunteers are very dedicated but full staffing is needed so volunteer recruitment continues.
- Metrics of keeping track of information collected – for those tested how many were contacted by a Tracer and how many knew they were exposed; for asymptomatic persons tested how many tested positive; is there a method to track this type of information? Dr. Abdemalek noted she has been reviewing case tracking back to June 22, 2020 but does not have answer to these questions yet.
- Does blood type effect chances of catching COVID-19? Dr. Abdemalek noted the COVID-19 test is a nose swab test, not a blood test, but it would be interesting to know if there is a correlation.

Chair Menser thanked everyone for the great discussion and noted the Board receives a COVID-19 updated every Tuesday morning.

## **7) Board of Health Members' Health Related Activities**

Commissioner Edwards – Proposed project in Yelm

Vice Chair Hutchings – Partners, Children Youth and Families meeting

Chair Menser – working on health pandemic

## **8) Health Officer's Report**

Dr. Dimyana Abdemalek reported on the following:

- Opioid Response Task Force – attended a meeting; impressed with public/community involvement
- Syringe Services Program
- Emergency Preparedness – spoke on the program work in the broader sense other than COVID-19; Maternal Child Health vaccinations

**9) Director's Report**

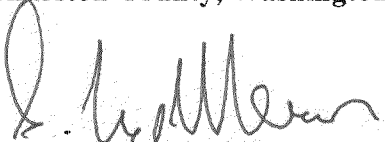
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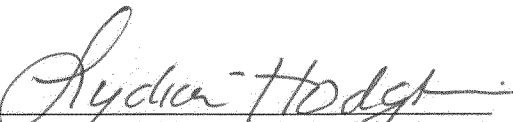
Schelli Slaughter reported on the following: it has been 160 days that over 100 PHSS staff; over 50 other county department staff; and many non-profit and community partners stepped up to work diligently in a professional capacity to keep our families safe and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time PHSS staff have continued to carry out the PHSS Mission "Working together to achieve the highest level of health and well-being for everyone." Every day, in addition to working on COVID-19, staff have continued to address over 100 other notifiable conditions, HIV testing, Syringe Services Program work, Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) visits to high risk mothers and pregnant women by tele-visits and delivering food, diapers, etc.; continue to serve the homeless; continued to provide access to behavior health treatment; have continued to ensure we have access to safe food under greater requirements; water quality for recreation; and safe septic system operation. Ms. Slaughter commended staff for their continued work. She thanked the Board for their leadership for all staff.

**11) Adjournment** – Chair Menser adjourned the meeting at 4:47 p.m.

**BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**Thurston County, Washington**

**ATTEST:**

  
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TYE MENSER, Chair

  
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Lydia Hodgkinson, Clerk of the Board

  
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JOHN HUTCHINGS, Vice Chair

Date: August 11, 2020

  
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GARY EDWARDS, Commissioner

**Thurston Community Television (TCTV)** - The Board of Health meetings are aired on TCTV each week on Sundays at 3:30 p.m., Mondays at 8:00 p.m., Tuesdays at 12:30 p.m., Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m., and Fridays at 6:30 a.m. and at 5:00 p.m.