



Memorandum

TO: COUNTY COUNCILMEMBERS

FROM: DR. STEVE BENNETT, Public Health Advisory Board Chair

DATE: JANUARY 4, 2023

RE: PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Greetings Councilmembers and Happy New Year!,

As you know, the Public Health Advisory Board revised its bylaws, membership and duties to comply with state law changes regarding Health Boards and Public Health Advisory Boards. One of the changes made was to increase the number of members on the Public Health Advisory Board to 21 members.

Our strategy for PHAB membership, which we described to the Health Board as changes were made, was to incorporate a 'hub and spoke' model with other relevant county boards and commissions. (Please see the other email attachment for a visual depiction of this model.) This strategy, which would make the PHAB the 'hub' and include representatives from the 'spoke' boards and commissions, is designed to create increased alignment, coordination, effectiveness, and value for all the health department-staffed or related/relevant boards and commissions. As we had discussed, this model also reduces duplicative efforts and helps ensure knowledge transfer and cooperation which is beneficial for the community at-large. To that end, after discussing this plan with the Health Board, PHAB leadership began the process of meeting with all the related boards and commissions and talked about this strategy as well as requested they select a member to serve. This process has taken a great amount of effort and time. Depending on meeting schedules and other agenda items, not all boards and commissions have finalized their representative name.

In accordance with the intent of the new model and member representation, we ask that you consider and approve **only** the applications of individuals who serve on boards and commissions who currently have a vacancy on the PHAB. The exceptions are for dedicated positions of a PeaceHealth representative and a tribal representative, both significant partners and stakeholders of the health department. Those applications we ask you to approve are:

- *Shu-Ling Zhao*, representative from the Whatcom Racial Equity Commission
- *Adrienne Renz*, representative from the Domestic Violence Commission
- *Ashley Thomassen*, representative from Housing Advisory Board
- *Leah Wainman*, second term At Large Member and Vice-Chair of PHAB



In addition, we ask that you **hold** the remaining 3 positions until the following boards/commissions and organizations select their representative and forward on to Council for approval. *This is not only to allow for the PHAB to realize its hub and spoke model, but also to not disenfranchise some of the boards, commissions, and individuals who work on them whose perspectives should be heard and valued as a part of the PHAB.*

- TBD, representative from the Business and Commerce Committee
- TBD, representative from the Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board
- TBD, representative from the Opioid Task Force

While the above applications submitted won't be sufficient to achieve a full 21-member roster, we have worked diligently over the last six months to increase the roster from six members to our current 16, per state guidelines. The important addition of current applicants, Shu-Ling Zhao, Adrienne Renz and Ashley Thomassen will raise our number to 18 (we are losing one member who has completed two terms- our business representative). Our goal is to have a full roster (with reps from the Business and Commerce Committee, Opioid Task Force and Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board by the end of the first quarter of 2023. These boards and some members are already being communicated with. We ask that you reserve those spaces and consider those applications as they are submitted rather than only the applications you currently have.

The PHAB continues to retain flexibility of representation with the 'At Large' members and as those members term off the board, opportunities for individuals not represented by existing boards and commissions will become available. In the meantime, it is our priority to fill the currently vacant positions as outlined in the hub and spoke model that follows. We ask that you continue to support our wishes as a body to appoint according to our priorities for enhanced representation and alignment of work among the many boards and commissions whose scope impacts and is impacted by PHAB and the health department. This has been a long process to organize the 'new' PHAB and we would not want this work to be negatively impacted just as it is about to be finalized.

Thank you for all your work for our community,

Please contact me with any questions.

Steve Bennett, PHAB Chair

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