



**Draft Minutes of the State Board of Health  
October 13, 2020**

Electronic meeting via GoToWebinar

**State Board of Health members participating by phone:**

Keith Grellner, RS, Chair	Jill Wood
Thomas Pendergrass, MD, MSPH Vice-Chair	Stephen Kutz, BSN, MP
John Wiesman, DrPH, MPH	Bob Lutz, MD, MPH
Fran Bessermin	Vazaskia Crockrell

**State Board of Health members absent:**

**State Board of Health staff present:**

Michelle Davis, Executive Director	Samantha Pskowski, Health Policy Advisor
Melanie Hisaw, Executive Assistant	Kaitlyn Donahoe, Health Policy Advisor
Kelie Kahler, Communication Manager	Cait Lang-Perez, Health Policy Analyst
Stuart Glasoe, Health Policy Advisor	
Lindsay Herendeen, Health Policy Analyst	

**Guests and other participants:**

Lilia Lopez, Assistant Attorney General  
Tami Thompson, Department of Health  
Kelly Cooper, Department of Health  
Michael Ellsworth, Department of Health  
Susan Shelton, Department of Health

Keith Grellner, Chair, called the public meeting to order at 1:15 p.m. and read from a prepared statement (on file). He then described the Board's operating procedure and ground rules for conducting a virtual meeting, and asked board members to introduce themselves.

**1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion:** Approve October 13, 2020 agenda

**Motion/Second:** Vice Chair Pendergrass/Member Bessermin. Approved unanimously.

**2. ADOPTION OF AUGUST 12, 2020 MEETING MINUTES**

**Motion:** Approve the August 12, 2020 minutes

**Motion/Second:** Member Wood/Member Crockrell. Approved unanimously. (John abstained, he wasn't at the August 12 meeting)

### 3. RULES HEARING—FOOD SERVICE, CHAPTER 246-215 WAC

Chair Grellner, introduced Kaitlyn Donahoe, Board Staff and Susan Shelton, Department of Health, who provided a summary of written comments received during the formal public comment period (see Tab 3 on file). Ms. Shelton highlighted three parts of the rule that the Department of Health (DOH) will modify and that are not included in the current version of the rule before the Board.

Ms. Shelton said the work represents the work of several staff, subject matter experts and stakeholders across the state (see presentation on file).

Jill Wood, Board Member, said great presentation.

Vazaskia Crockrell, Board Member asked Ms. Shelton to provide clarity regarding allowing animals in food establishments and whether there was consideration for people with allergies. Ms. Shelton said that they originally used language from Arizona, and during the formal comment period they had received similar questions. She said there are options for dogs to be on the premises with no signage required. She said they can provide signage to assist, and the requirement would be dog friendly and the outdoor does not have the same requirement.

Member Crockrell said her concern was due to her grandson's allergies, and the impact the allowance may have on individuals with allergies.

Chair Grellner said the DOH recommendations are incorporated on the existing draft of the rule. Ms. Shelton said the rice noodles comment had modification. Ms. Shelton confirmed they need to align with the federal food code.

Chair Grellner opened the meeting for public comment and read from a prepared statement (on file).

Holly Chisa, NW Grocery Association shared her position and concerns that refillable food containers, especially in light of the current pandemic, create potential risk and opportunities for foodborne illness and disease outbreak. She said she appreciates the work specifically around service animals, and spoke to the importance of clarity regarding trained service animals versus comfort animals and the language offered by the health department.

Jan Gee, President & CEO of WA Food Administration, thanked DOH staff for the work. Ms. Gee stated that she shared written comments, but wanted to call additional attention to date-marking, especially for cheese and cold meats. She said her organization is concerned that the APA states rules that industries must abide by and that they do not think the DOH rule language is adequate without additional language that a store first receive a warning if they do not have cheeses properly labeled and that this warning serves as an educational period. They believe that the Food Code is subject the federal APA rules, and that DOH adopt language they propose to align with these rules. Ms. Gee also supported Ms. Chisa's comments regarding refilling of containers. She said her organization supports the proposed dates for implementation.

Shelley Short, WA State Senator expressed disappointment that the Board may not allow donated meats, especially given food shortages during the pandemic. Senator Short stated willingness to work legislatively with Board and Department staff on these issues to allow donation of important protein sources.

Heather Trimm stated that there is generally support for this across the state, and that business are being innovative during COVID. They asked for flexibility within the rule for businesses to innovate and accept future technologies. They also support the delay in implementation. (Heather also recommended providing audience members with instructions about how to unmute at future meetings).

Samantha Louderback, Washington Hospitality Association stated that COVID-19 has challenged the restaurant and hotel industries in the state. They submitted comments in writing, but wanted to highlight concerns related to the timeline of the Food Code. They asked that the Board remain flexible about the timeline since we do not know when the pandemic will end and industries will be able to re-open. They also wanted to express concerns about refillable containers. They do not believe that the Board should allow individuals to bring their own containers based on concerns about food safety, cross-contamination, and disease transmission- especially in light of a pandemic.

Becky Elias, Global Retail Food Safety for Starbucks expressed support to the Food Rule and stated that allowing refillable options helps to meet their goals for sustainability. Due to technical issues with the GoToWebinar platform, Ms. Elias submitted her testimony in writing using on the virtual platform. Cait Lang-Perez, Board Staff, read Ms. Elias' testimony from the question box on her behalf: Good afternoon, thank you for the opportunity to participate today. My name is Becky Elias, and I lead Global Retail Food Safety for Starbucks. We are speaking today support the proposed changes to Washington Food Rule. In January 2020 Starbucks publicly announced sustainability commitments that include more reuse, recycling, shifting from single-use to reusable packaging, and elimination of food waste. Our sustainability goals, and our commitment to food safety and public health, are closely integrated, particularly as we all navigate safety in a time of covid-19. Foundationally to how we approach our work, we integrate science-based food safety and public health principles by design into the way that we execute sustainability in our day to day store operations. One of the proposed Washington Food Rule changes - Specifically, the use of reusable, refillable customer-owned beverage containers for immediate consumption - will help enable meeting sustainability goals and achieve food safety. Starbucks has worked collaboratively with the Washington State Department of Health and provided feedback throughout the rule revision process and appreciate the Board of Health's consideration of these changes. We submitted written comments that are available for further review. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

Chair Grellner closed the public comment period and opened Board members discussion on the proposed rule.

John Wiesman, Secretary of Health, Board Member, asked Ms. Shelton to share more about the Food Safety Committee's discussion around refillable returns and disease transmission, and how to best meet the joint goals of sustainability and safety. Ms. Shelton shared that the discussion occurred prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and

centered around individuals refilling their own containers (rather than employees refilling containers). Ms. Shelton expressed confidence that the rule can accommodate current concerns around COVID-19.

Member Wiesman also stated that the Department is seeking legal advice about what they can do around donated muscle meats. Ms. Shelton stated that they are out of compliance with current law, and that this provision would not take effect immediately (proposed March 2022). Ms. Shelton shared that the USDA is experiencing a large backlog and are estimating April 2021 before they can handle new meat. They are currently trying to find other alternatives that can meet federal and state laws. Ms. Shelton stated that any change to the WAC would still allow options that are allowed under current federal and state law.

Member Wood appreciated the flexibility behind the opt-in for refillable returns and the delayed implementation to accommodate COVID-19.

Thomas Pendergrass, Vice Chair, stated that it is highly complex to understand how food is distributed in Washington, and that this rule meets well-established and thought-breaking approaches to food safety in our communities. He stated that this is an important component of Foundational Public Health Services.

**Motion:**

The Board, adopts the proposed amendments to chapter 246-215 WAC as published in WSR 20-15-157 with the three revisions proposed by Department of Health at today's meeting (Specifications for Receiving – Temperature (WAC 246-215-03235(4), Prohibiting Animals (WAC 246-215-06570(4)(j), and Condition of Retention (WAC 246-245-08360(1)) and directs staff to file a CR-103 and establish an effective date.

**Motion/Second:** Member Wiesman/Vice Chair Pendergrass. Approved unanimously.

**4. RULES HEARING—PROHIBITION VITAMIN E ACETATE, CHAPTER 246-80-021 WAC**

Vice Chair Pendergrass, gave background on the proposed new section of the rule, WAC 246-80-021, which would continue to prohibit the sale, offer for sale, or possession with intent to sell or offer for sale vapor products containing vitamin E acetate at any location in Washington, including telephone and internet sales. He invited Samantha Pskowski, Board Staff to give a presentation of the proposed rule.

Ms. Pskowski provided a summary of written comments received during the formal public comment period (see Tab 4 on file).

Chair Grellner opened the meeting for public comment and read from a prepared statement (on file). The hearing began at 2:46 p.m.

Shaun D'Sylva, representing WA State Smoke Free Association, also represents stores and manufacturer of e-liquids. Mr. D'Sylva said he is glad the Vitamin E acetate finding is coming to fruition. He said the industry has been demonized from illegal sources. Over and over again the industry was bringing this up last year that it was Vitamin E acetate being made by illegal businesses. They have never used Vitamin E acetate in

manufacturing their products. Vitamin E acetate is oil based and their products are water soluble. Once the problem was identified as Vitamin E acetate, the number of outbreaks disappeared. Mr. D'Sylva said the Governor used false information to ban e-cigarettes and yet not a single manufacturer used the Vitamin E acetate. It is very disappointing when lumping incorrect products in this decision.

Gerry Pollet, Washington State Representative and instructor for the University of Washington School of Public Health, said that many public health professionals applaud the ban, but feel very strongly this ban does not go far enough. Recently, the UW, Lancet and other peer reviewed research shows that other ingredients such as terpenes, triglycerides, and other might contribute to development of EVALI, lung damage. We should not be stopping at vitamin E acetate. He said these products contain many other toxic chemicals that have effects on lung tissue. He said further work is needed to ban flavors that have serious potential to harm lung tissue, especially in youth.

Chair Grellner closed the public comment period and opened Board members discussion on the proposed rule.

Vice Chair Pendergrass noted this rule is an example of what happens when a new disease begins circulating.

**Motion:**

The Board adopts the proposed new section of rule, WAC 246-80-021, published in WSR-20-18-012 and directs staff to file a CR-103 and establish an effective date for the ban of this substance.

**Motion/Second:** Vice Chair Pendergrass/Member Bessermin. Approved unanimously.

The Board took a break at 2:50 p.m. and reconvened at 3:00 p.m.

## 5. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH UPDATE AND NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Member Wiesman provided updates about COVID-19, including updates on the current status of the pandemic, equity implications, efforts to address the virus, vaccination, and public health funding.

Member Wiesman also provided general updates from the Department of Health. He shared that the Governor interviewed the final recommended candidates for the Secretary of Health position, and is hoping that the new Secretary will be able to overlap with Secretary Wiesman to get oriented and prepare for the 2021 Legislative Session. Other vacant leadership positions, including a new state health officer to succeed Dr. Kathy Lofy, will be brought on after the new Secretary has begun.

Member Wiesman also shared that DOH has not been able to operationalize and implement the Notifiable Conditions emergency rules related to COVID-19 that the Board adopted on July 30, 2020. He stated that the Department is experiencing challenges related to staffing, ensuring changes align with Health and Human Services (HHS) requirements, and managing current lab reporting from facilities like nursing

homes. He said that the Department is working with Board staff on refining the rule language in the emergency rule, and in all likelihood will need to roll back some of those reporting elements and look at including those in the full notifiable conditions rule.

Member Wiesman said the Department is preparing and planning for a COVID-19 vaccine with the expectation that they will receive an initial, limited supply of vaccine before the end of the year. He said they are completing community engagement efforts, convening a Vaccine Science Advisory Workgroup, and submitting Washington's Vaccination Response Plan to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). He said that childhood and adult flu vaccines are available in Washington State.

He said an extension from the U.S. Department of Agriculture will allow Women Infants and Children (WIC) to continue offering remote services to participants. Since WIC started offering remote services in April 2020, program participation grew by about 4 percent and the rate of missed appointments dropped from 15 percent to almost zero. Washington WIC recently expanded the list of allowed foods to give families more choices and introduced the WIC Shopper App. For people who use Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, additional funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and WA State Department of Agriculture will allow the Department to expand fruit and vegetable incentives to participants. DOH will continue offering SNAP Market Match in farmers markets and Complete Eats in Safeway stores across the state, and will expand fruit and vegetable incentives to an additional 52 independently owned grocery stores over the next three years.

Member Wiesman said that the Maternal Mortality Review Panel completed the review of maternal deaths from 2018. This data will be aggregated for inclusion in the next legislative report which is due October 1, 2022, and DOH will begin working on the report next year.

Chair Grellner asked Board members to hold their questions until later in the meeting.

These comments and discussion by Board members were offered after the briefing on the Handling of Human Remains rule (agenda item 8):

Vice Chair Pendergrass asked about vaccine trials for various age groups. Member Wiesman said there is enrollment with various age groups and scientific advisory panels. He said the current publication of American Pediatrics provided a very well-done review of the vaccines. No general clinical office retains a minus 70 degree freezer.

Member Wiesman said the federal government is looking at creating containers for a place to store for 10 days. One of the challenges with that particular vaccine. There are many details that are important and yet to be figured out in terms of what vaccine will show safety and effectiveness.

Member Crockrell said she was curious about the clinical trials. She said communities of color are not very active in participating in clinical trials and have not fared very well during COVID-19. She asked how the distribution will happen when a vaccine is available to communities of color.

Member Wiesman said the advocacy for clinical trials has been positive. He said he knows there's been calls to get information on proportionate and disproportionate impact. The National Academy of Medicine says equity is a cross cutting population. He said race and ethnicity, geographic regions, and distribution pieces will be challenging.

He said the Department's role is to establish providers and they will tell the federal government how much vaccine to ship to which providers and where the high-risk areas are in communities. He said the federal government will directly ship to providers, directly from the manufacturer to the clinic, provider and pharmacy. He said it's possible that mass vaccination clinics, outreach vans will be included to make sure high-risk folks are covered. He said this is new vaccine, different than any that's been developed. He said the lack of trust from the beginning is challenging.

Member Crockrell said having credible messengers and advocates is critical and said she fears communities of color will be hesitant to take it even then. She said we don't want to see these disparities continue to exist.

## **6. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Janelle Cass said she supports a request to convene a COVID-19 Technical Advisory Committee (agenda item 9). She shared information and data with Board members.

Bernadette Pajer said she supports a request to convene a COVID-19 Technical Advisory Committee (agenda item 9), and shared she drafted the petition. She shared information and data with Board members.

Bob Runnells said he supports a request to convene a COVID-19 Technical Advisory Committee (agenda item 9). He shared information and data with Board members.

## **7. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND BOARD BUSINESS**

Michelle Davis, Board Executive Director greeted the Board and directed Board members to materials in their packets under tab 7. She indicated that packet materials included meeting notes from recent health promotion and environmental health committee meetings, which were primarily focused on rule updates and preparation for the Board's October meeting.

Ms. Davis described two emails from the Department. She said the first email alerted the Board that the Department will be changing the deadline for school and child cares to report immunization status of enrolled children to January 15th as a result of resource restraints due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a need to refine reporting processes. She said the second email notified the Board that the newborn screening program is returning to the routine second screen for newborns. She said the Department had suspended the routine second screen in April due to concerns about laboratory capacity and staff safety under the Governor's stay home stay safe order.

Ms. Davis announced that the CR-102 proposal for rulemaking regarding the Board's Handling of Human Remains rules had been filed on September 23. She said the hearing on this proposal is scheduled for the Board's November 9 meeting. She reminded Board members that the November meeting not be held the typical second Wednesday of the month due to Veterans Day.

Ms. Davis said the HIR Team completed the first Health Impact Review (HIR) for Fiscal Year 2021. She said the review, requested by Senator Darnielle, was on a draft bill that would change the age of jurisdiction for juvenile court. She thanked Board members for helping connect the HIR team to key informants and community organizations. She announced that the team had presented at the Legislative Staff Academy on October 6, where they shared information about HIRs and equity with 125 legislative staff members.

Ms. Davis updated the Board on recent task force activities. She reminded Board members that the 2019-2021 biennial budget tasked the Health Disparities Council with convening two task forces, the office of equity task force and the environmental justice task force. She said the budget included funding that enabled the Council to hire 4 staff to carry out the work. She said that LinhPhung Huynh was the project manager of the Office of Equity taskforce. Ms. Huynh took a position with the Department in May, but continued to work with the task force. She said the Office of Equity Task Force meeting was in August and the taskforce report was approved by the Governor's Office on October 8. Ms. Davis said Hannah Fernald provided administrative and organizational support and Esmael Lopez provided community outreach support for the task forces, and that their last day in the office was September 30. She said Ms. Fernald has taken a health services consultant 2 position with the Department of Health, and that Mr. Lopez accepted a position in Yakima with the Northwest Justice Project working on outreach and engagement with the farmworker community related to COVID-19.

Ms. Davis said Elise Rasmussen is the project manager for the Environmental Justice Taskforce, and that the last meeting for this group was September 25. She said Ms. Rasmussen will be wrapping up the report on that work and submitting it to the Governor's policy office in the coming weeks. She said that during the 2020 legislative session, the Health Disparities Council was also tasked with setting up a Social Equity in Cannabis taskforce. She commented on the taskforce responsibility for providing guidance to the Liquor and Cannabis Board as it sets up a Social Equity in Cannabis program – to address the disproportionate impact that cannabis enforcement had on Black and Indigenous communities and People of Color by prioritizing those communities in being able to obtain retail licenses in the cannabis industry. She said that the Council did not receive any funding to do this work. She noted the first meeting will be on Monday, October 26. She said it was her hope to retain Elise for a couple of months to help support this work.

Ms. Davis said the task force staff work was excellent. She expressed her gratitude for their contributions to the office.

#### **8. BRIEFING—HUMAN REMAINS, CHAPTER 246-500 WAC**

Stephen Kutz, Board Member provided a brief background and introduction to the Board's rulemaking update to the Handling of Human remains rule. He introduced Board staff Cait Lang-Perez, Health Policy Analyst, and Samantha Pskowski, Policy Advisor, to provide an overview of proposed changes.



Ms. Lang-Perez and Ms. Pskowski briefed the Board on the proposed changes to the handling of human remains rule, Chapter 246-500 WAC, to incorporate new disposition methods – alkaline hydrolysis and natural organic reduction.

Ms. Lang-Perez provided details on the timeline of the rulemaking and background on the legislation and new disposition methods. She noted that the Legislature passed Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5001, Concerning human remains, in the 2019 Legislative session. The Department of Licensing conducted rulemaking to incorporate new disposition methods which became effective in June 2020. Board staff filed the CR-101 in March 2020 and engaged stakeholders through Spring and Summer 2020.

Together, Ms. Pskowski and Ms. Lang-Perez provided an overview of the rule's sections, proposed changes, and next steps. The proposed changes to the rule include two new sections, and revisions to several existing sections, update and clarify the rule and incorporate regulations for the two new dispositions permitted by law, alkaline hydrolysis and natural organic reduction. Ms. Pskowski discussed provisions related to natural organic reduction, including instances in which this disposition would not be an allowable activity, physical contaminant testing requirements, and transit of remains following reduction. Ms. Lang-Perez discussed provisions related to alkaline hydrolysis, noting that there are two methods for this disposition. She said that this section outlines requirements for both high-temperature and low-temperature systems and provisions for transit of remains following reduction.

Ms. Pskowski described the next steps for this rulemaking project, including that the public comment period is underway, and staff have so far received one comment on the proposed rules. Staff anticipate holding a rules hearing at the Board's November meeting. If directed, staff would file the CR-103 in November or December, and rules becoming effective in January 2021.

Vice Chair Pendergrass mentioned that this is a fascinating rulemaking project, and commended staff on the work done on this project. He asked about low- and high-temperature hydrolysis. Is one faster or more efficient than the other? Why are there two methods?

Ms. Lang-Perez said that high-temperature systems are higher-pressure, faster, and more costly, whereas low-temperature systems don't have the same pressure build-up resulting in longer processing time and therefore lower operating cost.

The Board took a break at 5:05 p.m. and reconvened at 5:15 p.m.

## **9. REQUEST TO CONVENE A COVID-19 TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Vice Chair Pendergrass provided background information regarding a petition for rulemaking received from Ms. Bernadette Pajer on behalf of Informed Choice Washington. The petition for rulemaking requested the Board of Health and the Department of Health to convene an emergency committee regarding COVID-19 treatment protocols. Board staff, in consultation with legal counsel, determined the request did not require rulemaking and would be considered a request for a technical advisory committee (TAC). Vice Chair Pendergrass introduced Kaitlyn Donahoe, Board Staff, to provide additional information.

Ms. Donahoe briefed the Board on the request and a recommendation from staff.

Member Wiesman thanked the requester for bringing the topic forward and remarked on the importance of researchers, academics and practitioners come together to review all treatment options, whether they be allopathic or naturopathic. He said it was important to identify potential treatments through clinical trials. He said whether the disease is cancer, diabetes or other diseases, public health looks to federal agencies like the National Institutes for Health, National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health to convene these types of committees as those are where the expertise is to have the right conversations and assemble summary statements. He remarked that public health expertise doesn't fit in those areas and that there are other places that are appropriately resourced, both from the human and the financial side. He said he supported the spirit of the request, but that the Board and public health are not the right forum and do not have the resources. He said he would not support forming a technical advisory committee.

Fran Bessermin, Board Member, thanked Member Wiesman for his succinct words. She said she agreed with his comments and that she didn't believe it was within the Board's purview to convene a TAC on this topic. She said that there are other experts much more informed on this particular topic.

Bob Lutz, Board Member, said he supported the comments from his colleagues. He said that he didn't think a TAC on treatment is necessary to address what is again a clinical responsibility and clinical oversight, rather than what public health does. He said he would not support a TAC.

Vice Chair Pendergrass said there are many Washington state institutions actively involved in evaluating therapies. He shared an excerpt from a New England Journal of Medicine article reflecting information in the world of pediatrics and ICU. He noted that this is a controlled product and we need to use the expertise of our colleagues at UW, Pacific NW Medical School, WSU, Seattle Children's, and others nationwide. He said he would recommend that the Board deny the petition

Chair Grellner indicated his appreciation for the well-thought out comments of the petitioners. He noted after much thought, his conclusion, based on the Board's authority, legal guidance, and experience, is that public health policy is not medical treatment or standards of practice; public health often gets confused with health care, it's not the same and never has been. He said this work should be done by medical experts, hospitals, and universities. Chair Grellner encouraged listeners to review an announcement from the National Institute of Health regarding a COVID-19 study to identify possible treatments. He said the idea to do this work should be by the true experts, which is not the Board. He said he appreciated the request but also reinforced that the Board needs to support the experts in their works.

**Motion:** [The Board declines to convene a technical advisory committee regarding COVID-19 treatment protocols and directs staff to notify the requestor of the Board's decision.](#)

**Motion/Second:** Pendergrass/Kutz. Approved unanimously.

## 10. STATE HEALTH REPORT

Michelle Davis, Board Executive Director directed Board members to the 2020 State Health Report under Tab10 of the Board materials. She provided background regarding the State Health Report, citing the Board's duties under RCW 43.20.100 to develop a State Health Report during each even-numbered year.

Ms. Davis said that the Board provided direction to staff and discussed topics to include in the 2020 report at its June meeting. The 2020 report includes recommendations regarding: increasing state investments for Foundational Public Health Services; prohibiting the sale of flavored nicotine and tobacco products, including vapor products; funding of the Governor's Office of Equity; and lifting the suspension on the school environmental health and safety rules, including a recommendation to fund local health jurisdictions' school safety inspections.

Board members received a draft version of the 2020 State Health Report for their review and comment. She thanked Board members for their comments and contributions to the report and asked for their approval so that the report can be finalized and sent to the Governor.

Member Kutz commented that Ms. Davis and staff always do an excellent job on these reports and thanked them for their work on this.

Chair Grellner agreed with Member Kutz.

Ms. Davis commented that the next steps for this report is for Kelie Kahler, Communication Manager for the Board, to format the report and send to the Governor's office.

**Motion:** The Board approves the current working draft of the 2020 State Health Report that is developed in close consultation with the Board, and that with the Chair's authorization to approve a final report and transmit to the Governor.

**Motion/Second:** Pendergrass/Crockrell. Approved unanimously.

## 11. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Member Kutz thanked Member Weisman for the comprehensive discussion on COVID-19 and for all his work over the years.

Member Lutz thanked Member Weisman and Dr. Kathy Lofy for their leadership. He noted that tomorrow marks his area's seven-month mark of the first COVID-19 case and the need to focus on the present, that the pandemic is not behind us yet. He mentioned the fatigue that public health is feeling and how some commentary undermines the work being done and speaks poorly to the experience and challenges of families dealing with significant illness or death. He commented that this is a marathon after a marathon, after a marathon and we will continue to look at physical distancing and mask wearing following a vaccine.

Vice Chair Pendergrass added that there has been a change since the spring around therapies and we are getting better, but not out of the race. Noted the challenges of continuing to do other important work, particularly childhood vaccinations which have dropped since spring.

Chair Grellner thanked Senator Short and Representative Pollet for taking interest in the Board's work and providing comment. He also said he agreed with Member Lutz's comments regarding local health and concern around increasing cases of COVID-19. He noted concern around funding for local health jurisdictions and DOH around programs built up with short term monies and sustainability and mentioned a letter from the Kitsap Board of Health to their federal delegation on CARES Act funds. He expressed appreciation for Member Weisman and Dr. Kathy Lofy.

Member Weisman thanked everyone for the well wishes. He noted the passion and determination of public health workers and that they are often left out of the conversation of essential workers. He noted the challenges of inconsistent messages and the need to come together, it's taking time, but happening. He noted Washington has avoided the huge spikes of other states and his appreciation for the work of the people of Washington to heed prevention measures.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Keith Grellner, Board Chair, adjourned the meeting at 6:06 p.m.

## **WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH**

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Keith Grellner, Chair

To request this document in an alternate format or a different language, please contact Kelie Kahler, Washington State Board of Health Communication Manager, at 360-236-4102 or by email at [kelie.kahler@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:kelie.kahler@sboh.wa.gov) TTY users can dial 711.

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