

# WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

**Date:** January 12, 2022

**To:** Washington State Board of Health Members

**From:** Tom Pendergrass, Board Vice Chair

**Subject:** Briefing – Technical Advisory Group on Immunizations

## **Background and Summary:**

RCW 28A.210.060 establishes an immunization program as necessary to protect the health of the public and individuals by providing a means for the achievement of full immunization of school-age children against certain vaccine preventable disease. The Board, under, RCW 28A.210.140, is required to adopt rules which establish the procedural and substantive requirements for full immunization. The Board has adopted such rules in chapter 246-105 WAC.

In 2004, the Board directed staff to work with the Department of Health (Department) to convene an advisory group on vaccination requirements with the goal of developing criteria for determining whether specific immunizing agents should be required. The Immunizations Advisory Committee was established and recommendations from the Committee were presented and adopted by the Board in 2006. In 2017, the Board and Department convened a separate Committee to evaluate the criteria and make recommendation regarding updates. The Board adopted the recommended changes in November 2017.

The Board's criteria outlines the process by which an antigen would be reviewed. If the two qualifying assumptions - a process exists to opt out and the vaccine(s) is accessible and a cost-barrier does not exist - are met, the Board would determine if there is adequate information available to evaluate against the nine criteria. If so, a technical advisory group (TAG) of multidisciplinary members could be convened and vote on the nine criteria and an overall recommendation. The final recommendations of the TAG would be brought to the Board for next steps. The Board may choose to accept or decline a TAG's recommendation.

At the October 2021 meeting, the Board received a briefing on the criteria utilized to consider additions to chapter 246-105 WAC. Following a discussion, the Board voted to direct staff to begin the process of convening a technical advisory group to consider the COVID-19 vaccine. Since that time, staff at the Board and Department of Health have begun work to convene a TAG, including identifying TAG members and compilation of information needed to assess COVID-19 vaccine against the nine criteria.

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I have invited Sam Pskowski, Board staff and Hannah Febach, Department of Health staff, to provide an update on the progress of the technical advisory group. The Board will not take action on this item today.

**Staff**

Samantha Pskowski

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