

# WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

**Date:** April 13, 2022

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

**From:** Tao Sheng Kwan-Gett, MD, Chief Science Officer, Department of Health

**Subject:** Briefing – Technical Advisory Group Recommendation on COVID-19 Vaccine

## Background and Summary:

Under RCW 28A.210.140, the Board is required to adopt rules establishing procedural and substantive requirements for full immunization of school age children against certain vaccine preventable disease in order to protect public health. The Board has adopted these rules in chapter 246-105 WAC. The rules include a list of vaccine preventable diseases that children must be protected against for full immunization in WAC 246-105-030.

In 2004, the Board and the Department of Health (Department) convened 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 recommendations regarding updates. The Board adopted the recommended updates in November 2017.

The Board's criteria outlines the process by which an antigen is 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 determines if there is adequate information available to evaluate against the nine criteria. If so, a technical advisory group (TAG) of multidisciplinary members is convened to discuss and vote on the nine criteria, and to provide an overall recommendation. The final recommendations of the TAG are 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 and voted to begin the process of convening a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to consider whether COVID-19 should be added to the list of vaccine preventable diseases that children must be protected against for full immunization. The TAG met for an orientation meeting in December 2021 and met three times in February 2022 to consider COVID-19 against the nine established criteria (on file). At their final meeting, the TAG voted to recommend to the Board that it not add COVID-19 to the list of vaccine preventable diseases that children must be protected against. The recommendation will be presented and discussed today.

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I have invited Sam Pskowski, Board staff and Hannah Febach, Department of Health staff, to provide a review of the TAG's discussion and recommendation. The Board will then discuss this recommendation and take action on next steps.

### Recommended Board Actions

The Board may wish to consider the following motions:

The Board accepts the technical advisory group's recommendation to not include COVID-19 in WAC 246-105-030 and will not initiate rulemaking at this time.

OR

The Board directs staff to initiate rulemaking to consider amendments to chapter 246-105 WAC to include COVID-19 in requirements for school entry.

### Staff

Samantha Pskowski

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