

Technical Advisory Group to Consider COVID-19 for Inclusion in chapter 246-105 WAC SPECIAL MEETING SUMMARY NOTES

What: First Business Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group

When: February 10, 2022

Summary Notes:

Co-chairs Dr. Thomas Pendergrass (State Board of Health) and Dr. Tao Sheng Kwan-Gett (Department of Health) welcomed members of the technical advisory group (TAG). The co-chairs introduced Allegra Calder and noted she will be serving as the independent facilitator for this and future meetings. Ms. Calder facilitated introductions of present TAG members. She introduced support staff, Hannah Febach, Senior Policy Analyst for the Department of Health and Samantha Pskowski, Policy Advisor for the State Board of Health, who provided an overview of meeting etiquette. They also provided a brief overview of the Zoom webinar platform, described the meeting structure, and informed members of the public on how to view the meeting. Hannah noted that the TAG does not accept public comment, however the public may attend the meeting in listen-only mode and may submit comment to the Board via e-mail or regular mail. Ms. Pskowski then provided a brief review of the Board's criteria and process for considering an immunization for inclusion in the school entry rules.

Hannah introduced Dr. Eric Lofgren from Washington State University to provide information regarding criteria #5, *The vaccine containing this antigen prevents disease(s) that has significant morbidity and/or mortality in at least some sub-set of the population*. Dr. Lofgren provided information regarding case rates for children aged 5-17, noting differences with the Omicron variant. He provided information on the morbidity and mortality associated with COVID-19, including hospitalization rates for those vaccinated and unvaccinated. Dr. Lofgren noted the higher hospitalization rate for COVID-19 versus influenza and the risk of MIS-C in children who are diagnosed with COVID-19. He shared the limitations of understanding the full impacts of long-COVID, but that as time goes on more will be known.

Ms. Calder then introduced Dr. Stephen Lim, from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington to provide a presentation on criteria #6, *Vaccinating against this disease reduces the risk of person-to-person transmission, with transmission in a school or child care setting or activity being given the highest priority*. Dr. Lim provided a presentation outlining modeling for current transmission of COVID-19 and future projections. Dr. Lim also discussed the impact of vaccination on

(Continued on the next page)

transmission rates and the impact of booster shots in those eligible populations. He noted the projected decline of cases into early summer 2022 assuming that Omicron remains the dominant variant. He clarified that these projections do not take into consideration future variants.

Ms. Calder thanked the presenters and asked TAG members if there were questions for the presenters, noting that Dr. Lim would be unable to rejoin the meeting after lunch. Co-chair Pendergrass asked for clarification on the definitions of mild, moderate, and severe disease. TAG member Locke asked about hybrid immunity durability following infection and vaccination. Dr. Lim indicated he is unaware of any studies that have been done on this topic yet. TAG member Wilfond asked a clarifying question about the Food and Drug Administration's evaluation of myocarditis risk and the level of disease transmission that was occurring at that time. Dr. Lofgren responded that transmission was extremely low, especially in children at that time and noted the higher level of myocarditis in unvaccinated children if levels remain at their current level. TAG Member Rodriguez asked for clarification on the deaths in minors and if they were vaccinated. Dr. Lofgren replied that the available data does not distill to that level of information.

The meeting broke at 10:45 a.m. and resumed at 10:50 a.m.

Ms. Calder welcomed members back from the break. Ms. Febach introduced the next presenter, Dr. Lora Davis from the Department of Health to present on criteria #5. Dr. Davis gave a presentation on Washington State surveillance data on morbidity and mortality of COVID-19. The presentation included comparisons with national data. Dr. Davis shared that pediatric cases represent 19% of total COVID-19 cases in Washington State.

Hannah then introduced Dr. Laura Newman from the Department of Health to present on criteria #6. Dr. Newman presented data regarding COVID-19 outbreaks in K-12 school settings. The presentation included the definition of outbreak used by the Department and the federal government, the data collection process, and the statewide impact of outbreaks in schools and school-sponsored activities. Dr. Newman shared that 83% of school outbreak cases were in students [in 2021] with a total of 831 outbreaks in public schools, with the number increasing as in-person learning resumed.

Hannah introduced Chas DeBolt from the Department of Health to present additional information on criteria #5 and #6. Ms. DeBolt provided an overview of the methods used to identify the studies presented and clarified that they were not conducted in school settings. The presentation included an overview of a literature review conducted for studies on transmission of COVID-19. Ms. DeBolt shared that the understanding of the ability of the vaccine to prevent person-to-person transmission in congregate settings like schools is still evolving, but that the literature suggests the vaccine is effective in preventing severe illness.

The meeting broke for lunch at 12:09 p.m. and resumed at 1:00 p.m.

Ms. Calder welcomed members back and shared the objective for the next hour is for members to ask clarifying questions, hear from the group what they have heard in the morning, and to discuss the two criteria reviewed. TAG Member Lynch asked for clarification on the voting framework. Ms. Pskowski clarified what members will vote on and shared a slide with the two criteria under consideration for this meeting. TAG Member Murray thanked the presenters and asked for clarification on MIS-C and its link to COVID-19. Co-Chair Kwan-Gett and Ms. DeBolt clarified the case definition of MIS-C as requiring a direct link to a positive COVID-19 case, but that MIS-C resembles other conditions such as Kawasaki Syndrome where symptoms are caused by exaggerated immune responses.

TAG Member Wilfond asked for clarification on how to link the criteria. Staff clarified that for the initial criteria votes, members should look at each criteria on their own. TAG Member Locke commented that for criteria 6 the information available right now is about Omicron variant, but there will be future variants and wondered if we should be thinking about those. Co-chair Kwan-Gett responded that both the disease and vaccine are moving targets and we may not know right now what it is needed in the future.

TAG Member Muendel asked for clarification on myocarditis in male versus female patients. Presenters noted that in all cases males are more affected but the mechanism is unknown. TAG Member Hyseth clarified for the group that childcare needs to be considered, and that birth to age four studies do not exist, yet the rule covers this population. TAG Member Kallapa commented that Washington State does not require children to attend school until grade three. Staff provided clarification on what population the rules cover.

TAG Member Mueller asked about vaccination rates for college and university campuses. Dr. Lofgren noted that at Washington State University there is over 90% vaccination rate among students and staff. TAG Member Abdelmalek asked if there were studies about secondary spread of disease from school to home. Dr. Newman clarified that studies show infected students transmit to other household members. TAG Member Ybarra-Vega commented that criteria 6 appears to have two parts and the answer may not be the same for both with lack of clarity on transmission in the school setting.

TAG Member Wilfond asked if the Board has considered doing this process annually as the information changes and could this no longer be required at some point. Co-chair Pendergrass responded that in prior pandemics, this option did not exist, but that there have been instances where including a vaccine in this rule was not recommended. TAG Member Bell asked whether the group would be revisiting these criteria again. The Co-chairs guided TAG members to vote on the narrow question today, and the broader implication would be discussed at a future meeting. TAG Member Kallapa noted that for

criteria 6 the group should be prioritizing transmission in the student population, as we know the effects of the vaccine on transmission broadly. TAG Member Abdelmalek asked for clarification on duration of infectiousness. Ms. DeBolt responded that PCR tests do not provide this level of detail. TAG Member Ybarra-Vega asked if there was available data from other school districts or states on the impact of a requirement. Dr. Newman responded that there are no states currently with this requirement. Ms. Febach clarified that California and Louisiana are intending to add COVID-19 vaccine to their school requirements upon full licensure of a vaccine for this population.

Co-chair Pendergrass provided an overview of the voting process and directed TAG members to find their ballots in their e-mail. When all members voted, Co-chair Pendergrass announced the results. He shared some written comments that reflected that there is not enough evidence for criteria 6 at this time.

Criteria	Yes	No	Unsure
5: <i>The vaccine containing this antigen prevents disease(s) that has significant morbidity and/or mortality in at least some sub-set of the population.</i>	17	0	0
6: <i>Vaccinating against this disease reduces the risk of person-to-person transmission, with transmission in a school or child care setting or activity being given the highest priority.</i>	12	1	4

Ms. Febach and Ms. Pskowski provided TAG members with next steps and asked members to please keep an eye out for an e-mail with details on the next meeting scheduled for February 17, 2022. Co-chairs Pendergrass and Kwan-Gett thanked members for their time and closed the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.

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