

Washington State Board of Health (Board) Community Update

June 2023

Recent Happenings

A few highlights from the second quarter of the year:

The Board met in [April](#) (watch the [full meeting](#)):

- The Board directed staff to work with the Department of Health (Department) to convene a technical advisory committee (TAC) to evaluate both ARG1-D and GAMT deficiency using the Board's process and criteria to evaluate conditions for inclusion in [WAC 246-650](#) and then make a recommendation to the Board. The TAC is tentatively scheduled for early September.
- The Board received an update on its work to consider adding [OTCD as a condition for newborn screening](#). Since the Legislature did not include funding in their final budget to increase the newborn screening fee for OTCD, rulemaking to add OTCD will be put on hold. The Department plans to resubmit its funding request for OTCD before the next legislative session for reconsideration.

The Board met in [June](#) (watch the [full meeting](#)):

- The Board received updates on rulemaking work for [primary and secondary school environmental health and safety rules](#), which continue to be on hold due to a budgetary proviso. The Board discussed possible options for moving this work forward.
- The Department of Health provided an update on implementation of the Board's [rules for large \(Group A\) drinking water systems for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances \(PFAS\)](#). Also known as "forever chemicals," PFAS do not break down in the environment and have been detected in some water systems in the state. Visit the [Department's PFAS test results dashboard](#) and [PFAS web page](#) for more information. The Board continues to monitor the issue with an eye toward possible rulemaking in the future.
- Updates were also given on rulemaking for [water recreation facilities](#) in Washington state, such as swimming pools, spas, hot tubs, splash pads, water parks (including slides, lagoons, and lazy rivers), natural designated swim areas, and more. The Board continues to explore possible updates to the rules, with a technical advisory group being formed this summer. [Subscribe](#) to get updates.



Welcome to our new staff!

The Board is delighted to welcome two new staff to our team. Joining us are Michelle, Communications Manager, and Andrew, Health Policy Advisor.

Upcoming openings:

Know someone great who cares about public health in Washington? The Board will be hiring for two positions: a **Communications Consultant** and an **Equity and Social Justice Manager**. To get notified of these openings, sign up for our [general distribution list](#).

The Board also held virtual meetings of its two standing policy subcommittees:

- The **Environmental Health Committee** met on [May 19 \(Agenda Español\)](#). This committee covers topics such as public drinking water systems, on-site sewage systems, animal waste, food safety, water recreation, shellfish sanitation, school environmental health and safety, transient accommodations, and more.
- The **Health Promotion Committee** met on [May 25 \(Agenda Español\)](#). This committee covers topics such as notifiable conditions, immunizations, handling of human remains, newborn screening, communicable diseases, standards for prenatal testing, auditory and visual standards, and more.

Policy committees are advisory in nature and currently meet quarterly, subject to Board Member and staff capacity. Committees can consist of up to five volunteer members. Agendas may include rulemaking updates from staff, legislative updates, informational briefings on health promotion and environmental health topics related to the Board's authority and legislative priorities, and preparation for upcoming Board meetings. Subcommittee meetings also serve as a forum for Board members to learn and inquire about health promotion and environmental health topics of interest.

Opportunities to Be Involved

- [Health Disparities Council](#) Statute Redesign: The Council was created in 2006 and is responsible for creating a state action plan with policy recommendations to eliminate health disparities by race/ethnicity and gender in Washington. The Board was tasked with convening and staffing the Council, and the Board holds a seat on the Council to inform the Council's work. In 2022, the Council began forming recommendations to redesign the statute ([RCW 43.20.270-43.20.280](#)) that directs the Council's work. Several redesign [workshops](#) were held to gather input and discuss ideas. The Council is planning an in-person and virtual roadshow around the state this summer to hear from communities about this [redesign work](#). Interested in giving feedback or getting to know the Council? [Contact Grace and Linh](#), Council staff.
- We are currently expanding our interested parties list for our [work on adding conditions to the Washington State Newborn Screening Panel](#). If you'd like to [stay up to date on this](#) work, for updates the Board, to join our Interested Parties list.
- Our [Water Recreation Facilities Rule](#) technical advisory committee will have its first meeting on Thursday, July 13. [Sign up](#) to receive monthly updates or contact [Ashlie](#) at the Department to get involved.
- We are revising our [Shellfish Sanitation Rules](#) with emphasis on public health safeguards for Vibrio Parahaemolyticus bacteria. If you'd like to stay up to date, join the [Washington Department of Health's Interested Parties list](#) for Vp updates.
- Our [next Board meeting](#) is scheduled for Wednesday, August 9, 2023 in Olympia, with virtual and in-person options, including ASL and Spanish interpretation services. Physical meeting location: WA State Capitol Campus, John A. Cherberg Building, Rooms ABC, 304 15th Avenue S.E. Olympia, 98501
- [Email the Board](#) anytime with public comment on any of our work or issues that matter to you.

