

WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

Date: April 10, 2024

To: Washington State Board of Health Members

From: Michelle Davis, Executive Director

Subject: Proposed Updates to the Memorandum of Understanding Between the State Board of Health and Department of Health

Background and Summary:

The State Board of Health (Board) was created in 1889 in article XX of the Washington State Constitution. Chapter 43.20 RCW establishes the Board's powers and duties. RCW 43.20.030 describes Board membership, authorizes the Board to employ an Executive Director and Confidential Secretary, and requires the Department of Health (Department) provide necessary technical staff support to the Board. The law does not define "technical staff support," or provide any detail about how the Board and Department will work together.

The Board adopted its first Memo of Understanding (MOU) with the Department in 1999, which detailed the staff support and administrative services the Department would provide to the Board. The MOU was amended in 2006 and redrafted in 2012 to provide greater detail about staffing and to recognize the creation of the Interagency Council on Health Disparities. In 2017, MOU revisions included organizational and management changes at the Department, staff participation in various workgroups, and a commitment to work together regarding issues of mutual interest. It also required the Board and Department to review and renew the MOU every two years.

The most recent update to the MOU was in 2019, which incorporated Health Impact Review work conducted by Board staff, public records request coordination and support, collaboration on language access and work with the Department's Office of Civil Rights and Risk Management. The 2019 MOU also delegated authority to the Executive Director for hiring and termination of Department employees serving as staff to the Board and granted Board staff access to emerging Department communication tools and services. The 2021 update of the MOU was tabled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In recent months, Board and Department staff have worked to develop a new MOU for the Board's consideration. This draft:

- Reflects organizational changes at the Department,
- Adds the Department's Deputy Chief of Policy as a conduit to the Department's operational and organizational processes that impact Board staff,
- Adds environmental justice assessments required for significant rules,

(continued on the next page)

Washington State Board of Health

April 10, 2024, Meeting Memo

Page 2

- Includes reference to our work together under the Foundational Public Health Services law.

Recommended Board Actions:

The Board may wish to consider and amend, if necessary, the following motion:

The Board directs staff to develop a final Memorandum of Understanding between the Board and Department, in close consultation with the Chair. The Chair is authorized to finalize and approve the MOU on behalf of the Board.

To request this document in an alternate format or a different language, please contact the Washington State Board of Health at 360-236-4110 or by email at wsboh@sboh.wa.gov. TTY users can dial 711.

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