

## Quarterly Community Update

### RECENT HAPPENINGS

The Board met in August. Among other things, the Board heard updates on the following topics:

- Board and Department of Health (Department) staff reviewed federal changes in newborn screening and proposed updates to Washington State's candidate condition review process. The Board accepted these proposed updates to the qualifying assumption to evaluate conditions for Washington's mandatory newborn screening panel.
- The Health Impact Review (HIR) team presented the scope and impact of HIRs in fiscal year 2025. Board Members recognized the important role HIRs have played in legislative decision-making.
- Chair Hayes and Board staff Ash Noble provided an update on the school rule project. They highlighted a video made by Board staff to increase awareness of the rule.
- Department staff provided an update on the water recreation rulemaking. The Board noted that schools with swimming pools will be impacted and asked staff to consult with the School Environmental Health and Safety Technical Advisory Committee members.



### Upcoming Meetings

**Board of Health:**

October 8

November 19

**Health Promotion  
Committee:**

December 4

**Environmental Health  
Committee:**

December 11

## SCHOOL RULES PROJECT UPDATE

More than one million kids attend public and private schools in Washington State. Chapter 246-366 WAC establishes minimum environmental health and safety standards in schools. These rules haven't been updated in over 60 years.

In 2009, the Board made a new rule for school environmental health and safety (Chapter 246-366A WAC). Because those rules were never funded by the Legislature, they were never used. The Board repealed Chapter 246-366A WAC during the June 2025 Board meeting.

In 2024, the Legislature required the Board to create a committee to review the school environmental health and safety rules and suggest updates. The Board sent its recommendations to the Governor and Legislature in a June 2025 report. The report recommends making rules in three phases to keep kids safe while keeping costs manageable.

The current state budget prevents the Board from implementing new school rules. The earliest the Legislature could take action to allow the school rules to be implemented would be during the 2026 legislative session. The Board would then start making rules in line with the recommendations in the 2025 report.

To keep up with new school rule developments, join our mailing list or contact Ash Noble, Policy Advisor, at [ash.noble@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:ash.noble@sboh.wa.gov). You can also visit our school rules web page at School Environmental Health and Safety Rule.

## LOCAL BOARDS OF HEALTH AND TRIBES RULEMAKING

The Board is beginning rulemaking to implement the [latest local boards of health and Tribes legislation](#). This legislation affirms Tribal sovereignty. It states that Tribal governments with reservations or trust lands in a public health jurisdiction will pick a Tribal representative to serve on local boards of health. This legislation also states that 501(3)(c) urban Indian organizations recognized by the Indian Health Service in Washington and serving American Indian and Alaska Natives will pick a representative to serve on local boards of health.

Visit the [Board's rulemaking page](#) if you are interested in learning more about this work.

## HEALTH IMPACT REVIEWS

[Health Impact Reviews \(HIRs\)](#) are completed by the Board with the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities. An HIR is an objective, non-partisan, evidence-based tool. HIRs give the Governor and state Legislators information about how legislation may impact health and equity in Washington State.

In September, the HIR team presented at the 2025 Public Health Law Conference. The Network for Public Health Law hosted this conference in Seattle. The presentation was titled "*Embedding Equity in State-Wide Decision Making to Address Root Causes of Health Inequities*" and discussed HIRs. Staff explained how HIRs have changed over time to improve the information shared with decisionmakers. Board staff highlighted ways to focus on the root causes of health inequities in policy. Staff also shared how legislators have used HIR findings to discuss bills with other legislators, develop information to share with the communities they represent, make changes to a bill, and more. This opportunity helped share the Board's HIR work with public health staff across the country. While attending the conference, Board staff learned from public health officials, lawyers, leaders of community-based organizations, researchers, and more.

To learn more about HIRs, visit the [HIR website](#).

Check out this video that describes Health Impact Reviews.



If you would like to learn more about the Board or be involved in our work, contact [Hannah Haag](#), Board Community Outreach Coordinator.

## CAMPS AND OUTDOOR FESTIVALS

The Board is conducting rules reviews of Chapter 246-374 WAC: Outdoor music festivals, and Chapter 246-376 WAC: Camps. Local health authorities enforce and implement these rules.

If you have attended a camp or music festival, operate a camp, enforce or implement rules, issue permits, or hold outdoor music festivals, we want to hear from you! Your voice and experience are crucial for the Board's review of these rules.

If you would like to talk more with us about this rule review, please contact Ash Noble, Policy Advisor at [ash.noble@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:ash.noble@sboh.wa.gov)

## BOARD OPENINGS

Apply to serve as a Board Member for one of three openings: someone with experience in health and sanitation, someone who is a local health officer, or someone who is a city official serving on a local board of health. These positions are appointed by the Governor for a three-year term, with the possibility of reappointment.

If you have questions or need more details, contact Hannah Haag, Board Community Outreach Coordinator.

## PARTICIPATION IN OUR WORK

The Board continues to work on newborn screening, water recreation, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, Tribal representation on local boards of health, and other topics. If you would like to meet with staff to share your experiences with how these topics impact the health of your community, please contact Hannah Haag, Board Community Outreach Coordinator.

Email the Board anytime with public comments on any of our work or issues that matter to you.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO BE INVOLVED



### UPCOMING MEETING: **OCTOBER 8, 2025**

Physical meeting location:  
Washington State Department of Health  
111 Israel Road S.E.  
Tumwater, WA 98501  
Building: Town Center Two  
(TC2, Rooms 166 & 167)

Zoom information is posted on our website two weeks prior.