

Monthly Report to CHAB on Washington State Board of Health (SBoH) Meeting

Meeting Date : 12 July 2006

Topics not of direct interest to the CHAB will not be elaborated on. Some information on these items, along with the meeting agenda and other materials, can be found on the State Board's web site, at http://www.doh.wa.gov/sboh/Meetings/Meetings_2006/2006-07_12/Materials07122006.htm.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

The State Board of Health invited the Island County Board of Health to address local priorities, concerns and successes. The Island County Board of Health elected to present a set of five briefings focused on local successes. Two presentations were from volunteer citizen advisory boards and three were from the Island County Health Department.

Island County Citizen Advisory Board reports

Island County Commissioner Mac McDowell introduced the two citizen advisory board reports.

Environmental Health Assessment Team (EHAT).

Mr. Jim Patton briefed the Board on the EHAT. He discussed the impetus for developing the EHAT, the interests of the volunteers, how they worked to identify issues of concern to the county population, how those interests were prioritized, and how the top priorities were selected. He then described the actions being taken by EHAT committees to effect changes by addressing the top two priorities, Illegal Dumping and Littering, and Improving the Walkability of Island County. He provided the Board with a briefing package that included an EHAT overview, copies of recent local newspaper articles on EHAT activities, copies of materials for the Litter And It Will Hurt campaign, a Keep Island County Klean (KICK) brochure, a list of local resources for free disposal of waste and trash of all sorts, and a checklist for assessing the walkability of various routes.

Community Health Advisory Board (CHAB).

Mr. David Macys briefed the Board on the CHAB. He described the organization and its members, and the ways in which it represents the various interests of the people of the county. He briefly described the background to the formation of the CHAB, and discussed the ongoing actions being taken by the CHAB. Emphasis was given to the focus on the CHAB's top priority, Early Childhood Support and Parent Education. He concluded by touching on a few accomplishments, and by acknowledging the support the CHAB receives from both the Health Department and the Board of Health. He provided a briefing package to the Board that included the CHAB report "The Health of Island County: Key Indicators Update 2005", the CHAB brochure "Working For A Healthier Community: Community Health Advisory Board", and the text of his prepared remarks, including graphics. A copy of the text and graphics is attached.

Island County Health Department Reports

The Island County Health Department director, Mr. Tim McDonald, introduced the three health department reports.

Mental Health Support for Jail Inmates.

Ms. Jackie Henderson briefed the Board on this program. She pointed out that individuals with chronic mental illness and/or substance abuse problems account for between 60% and 80% of inmates in the local jails, and that not only is Medicaid funding not available to inmates, they must reapply for Medicaid eligibility once they are released. The program is designed to (1) identify individuals who need mental health professional assistance, refer them to sources of appropriate treatment, and develop a plan for obtaining continuing treatment; and (2) provide assistance in reintegrating with society, including help in reapplying for Medicaid and other governmental assistance programs. She noted that there was good support for this program from the judges, law enforcement personnel and the jail staff. She concluded by noting that about 90% of inmates are released and, to paraphrase the words of one guard, do you want them upset with society, or prepared to become productive members of society?

Family Support.

Carol McNeil, Nursing Services director, introduced Loretta Bezold of the Health Department and Bess Windecker-Nelson of the Family Support Alliance, who briefed the Board on this program. Ms. Bezold described the Healthy Baby Program, which provides a visit by a public health nurse to every family with a newborn. Referrals generally come from the local hospitals and physicians. The visits are used to provide information to the families, educational materials to help them with the minor problems that arise, referrals to various service providers as appropriate, and a Gift Package of items donated by many of the partner organizations that work with the Health Department.

Ms. Windecker-Nelson described the Family Support Alliance (FSA), which brings service providers and families together, and also provides some family services directly. The FSA also works with the Health Department to support the Healthy Babies Program, and with the Mental Health Support for Jail Inmates Program to provide information and referrals to inmates on parenting.

EDITORIAL COMMENT. The FSA, as noted on their web site, was formed in response to the CHAB's Special Health Report on Early Childhood Support and Parent Education. This, along with their partnering with the Health Department, makes the FSA an excellent example of the bottom-up, public-private partnering environment for health to be found in Island County. See also the Commentary section, below.

Hydrogeology.

Mr. Douglas Kelly briefed the Board on this program. He noted that about 80% of the Island County population depends on two separate sole source aquifers for their potable water supply. The county has developed a program to defend these aquifers, to learn more about them and the conditions that affect them. He outlined the results of earlier studies, detailed some of the results of more recent studies, and noted specific contributions to the more precise identification of critical recharge areas and the development of a new seawater intrusion prevention policy. These efforts have supported the development of a comprehensive database that permits more detailed analyses and more accurate predictions regarding impacts on the aquifers. He noted the contributions of another Island County citizen advisory board, the Water Resources Advisory Committee and its watershed planning efforts.

Mr. Michael Shelton of the State Board of Health and an Island County Commissioner, noted that Mr. Kelly is a scientist, not a politician, and that his efforts have led to a more objective, data-driven process for both land use decisions by the Board of Island County Commissioners and waiver and appeals reviews for on-site septic systems by the Island County Board of Health.

Commentary

The presentations elicited several favorable comments from members of the State Board of Health, both during the meeting itself and in informal discussions during and after the meeting. Of particular note was the comment from one of the consumer representatives on the Board. In referring to another project the

Board had initiated, he stated that (paraphrasing) the Board needed to follow the impressive example of Island County and its use of citizen advisory boards in order to get not just input from affected members of the community but active participation by the community throughout the process.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Macys". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" and last name "Macys" clearly distinguishable.

David A. Macys, MS, CIH, DABT
CHAB Liaison to the Board of Health