



PHT Meeting Minutes April 4, 2024, 8:30-10:30 am Skagit Station Meeting Room

Members: Claudia Avendaño-Ibarra, Thomas Boucher, Sonia Garza, Bill Henkel, Leon John, Chris Johnston, Maddy Mackenzie, Lilia Ortiz, Mario Paredes, Maureen Pettitt, Margaret Rojas, Lyndie Simmonds, John Sternlicht

Community Stakeholders: Chris Baldwin, Marci Bloomquist, KaSandra Church, Polly Dubbel, Kristen Ekstran, Keith Higman, Erin Van Fempé

Ex-Officio: Peter Browning, Howard Leibrand

Guests: Kelli Baker, Christi Brua Weaver, Lani Miller, Sandra Huber

Welcome & Agenda Review:

Kristen welcomed everyone, then turned things over to Margaret. Margaret reviewed the day's agenda and provided updates from the last Steering Committee meeting.

Behavioral Health Data Review:

Kristen welcomed Stacey Anderson to present recent behavioral health data. Stacey provided background on the different sources of data she would be sharing and the types of mental health indicators that would be discussed: Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) for youth the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps (CHR&R) and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) for adults.

For youth, she shared data on feelings of hopelessness/sadness/anxiety (including disaggregated data for race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and grade level) and for 10th graders who know warning signs for suicide and how to get help.

For adults, Stacey shared data on mentally unhealthy days, 14 of more bad mental health days, suicide rates over time and by race, and number of mental health providers for Skagit residents. She also shared areas where we are missing data, highlighting depression surrounding pregnancy and disaggregated data for specific populations. There was a short question and answer period following her presentation.

Review of PHT Behavioral Health Initiatives/Update presentations:

For the next part of the meeting, Kristen invited special guests to update members on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funded Latinx Mental Health Matters (MHM) initiative. She reminded them that the program was identified to help activate the CO2 strategy included in the Covid Recovery Plan.

Kristen introduced Sandra Huber, Co-founder/Co-Director of Mental Health Matters (MHM) and Christi Brua-Weaver, Behavioral Health Resources Coordinator with Skagit County Public Health, to provide the update. Sandra shared a presentation about the program and included aspects regarding the origins of the program, their approach to the work, and highlights from trainings and events. She ended by sharing some of their

data on methods and results of the program. Christi, who manages the contract for Latinx MHM for the County, reported on the accomplishments of the program for 2023. She also provided information about current funding challenges for the program, given ARPA funding ends in December 2024.

Summary conversation:

Members were prompted to share their thoughts in response to the following questions,

- What is hopeful about today's information?
- What other promising practices can we identify for community-driven promotion of mental health and emotional resilience?
- How can we mobilize support for behavioral health and recovery?

Members shared a variety of insights, key insights were:

- Ideas for additional trainings, possibly around the science of hope, positive psychology, de-escalation (especially for small businesses).
- The need for more data around culturally responsive behavioral health services and the possible utilization of focus groups to better understand prenatal mental health needs (maybe certifying home nurses in some level of behavioral health training).
- Suggestion of a scholarship to support students wanting to study behavioral health and practice in Skagit County.
- The need for a consolidated, updated list of behavioral health resources and providers.
- Exploration of other ways to encourage wellness outside of counseling, like community walks.
- Utilization of focus groups to hear from individuals experiencing mental and behavioral health challenges.
- Other members stressed the importance of doing something about suicides and opioids (especially given the emergence of Xylazine in Fentanyl)

Meeting Adjourned:

Kristen reminded the group of future meeting times and topics. She then thanked them for their time and adjourned the meeting.