



**KING COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH**  
999 Third Avenue, Suite 1200  
Seattle, Washington 98104-4039

Carolyn Edmonds, *Board of Health Chair*

**BOH Members:**

Richard Conlin  
George Counts  
Jan Drago  
Carolyn Edmonds  
Ava Frisinger  
Larry Gossett  
Steve Hammond  
David Hutchinson  
David Irons  
Kathy Lambert  
Frankie Manning  
Bud Nicola  
Julia Patterson  
Alonzo Plough  
Tom Rasmussen

**BOH Staff:**

Kathleen Uhlorn

**King County Board of Health**  
**Friday, September 16, 2005**  
**King County Council Chambers**  
**MEETING PROCEEDINGS**

Members Present: Ava Frisinger; Larry Gossett; David Hutchinson; David Irons; Frankie Manning; Bud Nicola; Tom Rasmussen; Carolyn Edmonds

Members Absent: Richard Conlin; George Counts; Jan Drago; Steve Hammond; Kathy Lambert; Julia Patterson

Staff: Dorothy Teeter and Jane McKenzie

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:45 AM by Board Vice-Chair, David Hutchinson.

2. Announcement of Alternates

No alternates were present.

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the July 2005 meeting were adopted.

4. General Public Comments

Mr. Rob Johnson of the Transportation Choices Coalition testified in favor of the draft resolution to be presented by the Overweight Prevention Initiative panel. Mr. Johnson also informed the Board of future state legislative efforts that support the goals listed in the draft resolution.

5. Chair's Report

Vice-Chair Hutchinson reported:

- There are still no positive tests for the West Nile Virus in King County. The State Department of Health announced that a magpie collected in Yakima County tested positive for West Nile Virus. There was a second positive test from Benton/Franklin County's Mosquito Control District; the first occurred last week. In Washington State, there are still no cases of West Nile Virus in humans.
- The November meeting of the Board of Health has been cancelled.
- Invitations were e-mailed to the Third King County Overweight Prevention Initiative Forum scheduled for Friday, October 14<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Tukwila Community Center.

- The Washington State Public Health Association Annual Meeting will be held on October 10-12 in Yakima at the Yakima Convention Center.
- Board member Manning was asked to sit on the subcommittee to review proposed fees for personal health services.

Chair Edmonds welcomed Board member Manning back to Seattle from Texas. Board member Manning had been detailed to the Veterans' Administration Hospital in Dallas, Texas.

#### 6. Board Member Updates

Vice Chair Hutchinson and Board member Nicola attended the University of Washington's Summer Institute for Public Health Practice, a week-long curriculum that focused on emergency preparedness. Twenty-three states were represented. Vice-Chair Hutchinson sat on a panel concerning pandemic flu and Board member Nicola assisted in coordinating the entire event.

Board member Rasmussen reported that the Seattle City Council will be receiving a briefing from the Health Department on September 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> on emergency preparedness and the coordination with the first responders (on the 19<sup>th</sup>) and on planning for an anticipated pandemic flu (on the 26<sup>th</sup>).

#### 7. Director's Report

Dorothy Teeter, Interim Director, reported:

- Public Health has been an active participant in Operation Evergreen, Washington State's name for the effort to plan for and receive potential evacuees from Hurricane Katrina. While the number of evacuees was not as great as initially anticipated, Public Health spent approximately 10 days in partnership with agencies throughout the County, the State and the City of Seattle to ensure an integrated approach and response to those who did come to Washington.
- One case of measles was reported in the last month with no further spread of the disease reported.
- Public Health, in partnership with the Pioneer Square Clinic of Harborview and the YWCA's Opportunity Place, opened a new medical clinic for homeless women in April, which has served over 300 women to date.
- King County Executive Ron Sims along with the Seattle Mariners are working with Public Health to host a forum on pandemic flu planning with the business community. The event is planned for October 3<sup>rd</sup> at Safeco Field with the goal of building deeper partnerships with our business community.
- Public Health, in conjunction with the Harborview Injury Prevention Center, received a joint award to work to see if the Designated Driver and Safe Driver Programs are having an impact on saving lives in the people aged 21 to 34.

#### 8. Administrator's Report

Kathy Uhlorn, Board of Health Administrator, presented an overview of the meeting for the viewing public and Board members. As a follow-up to July's meeting about HIV/AIDS prevention efforts, Ms. Uhlorn said that Board member Patterson prepared correspondence to the Washington State Congressional delegation to support the reauthorization of the Ryan White CARE Act; legislation that provides over \$5 million of treatment and care for HIV/AIDS patients in King

County annually. Ms. Uhlorn asked Board members to contact her if they wanted to sign this correspondence.

#### 9. Public Health Operational Master Plan (PH OMP) Consultant Selection Update

Ms. Toni Rezab, Senior Policy Analyst, Office of Management and Budget, and Ms. Carrie Cihak, Senior Legislative Project Lead, King County Council began by reviewing the motivation for the undertaking of this two-year process which is declining or limited revenue sources in the face of increasing public health needs in our community as well as new mandated services. An RFP was let in late June of 2005, closing in late July 2005, for a consultant to work on the PH OMP. Four proposals were submitted and evaluated. A finalist has been selected and contract negotiations are pending. The Board will be updated when more information is available.

#### 10. Presentation of core indicators

David Solet, PhD, Assistant Chief, Epidemiology, Planning and Evaluation Unit, Public Health–Seattle & King County presented Core Indicators data about the health status of King County residents on multiple determinants of health to be used by Public Health, the King County Board of Health, community-based organizations and advocates, community clinics, public agencies, policy makers and the general public. Dr. Solet demonstrated how to retrieve this information, which is posted on-line. Data on County residents is sorted by variables such as demographic group, poverty, income, race, region, health planning area, age, and gender. A comparison between King County and other similar metropolitan counties is also possible with this tool.

One of the health indicators is the increased rate of King County residents without health insurance, the focus of the Data Watch, published by the Epidemiology, Planning and Evaluation Unit of Public Health. National studies show that those without health insurance are much less likely to get essential preventive care and general health care services. In 2004, King County experienced the highest rates of a lack of health insurance since 1991, the earliest year data was collected for this variable, 15.5% or about 190,000 King County adults under the age of 65 lack insurance. Large disparities in accessing health care and insurance vary by factors such as race, region and affect an individual's chance of receiving essential health care services and not getting the care that they felt was needed. Substantial disparities in health insurance coverage vary by household income as well as race/ethnicity, but rates of those without health insurance are increasing in every group. Uninsured King County adults are less likely to get the essential preventive care services and not to get needed medical care for themselves or their children.

Board member Rasmussen added that the Seattle City Council voted last Monday to place an advisory measure on the ballot this November, asking Seattle voters to vote on a statement indicating that there should be universal quality health care for all in their community. Chair Edmonds requested that the Board take some leadership on the issue of the uninsured in King County, using the advisory ballot as a barometer for public sentiment, with follow up in December 2005 or later in 2006.

#### 11. Panel presentation on the increase in the medically uninsured

Susan Johnson, Manager, Health Action Plan, Public Health – Seattle & King County introduced panel members: Charissa Fontinos, M.D., Medical Director, Public Health – Seattle & King County; Rosemary Aragon, M.P.A., Executive Director, Pacific Hospital Preservation and

Development Authority; Johnesse Spisso, R.N., M.P.A., Chief Operating Officer, Harborview Medical Center; and Vicki Wilson from the Governor's Health Policy Office.

Dr. Fotinos began by saying that the lack of health insurance is a symptom of a larger disease; a health care system that is in trouble and needs a big, broad view by policy makers at every level. Those who lack insurance delay or forego care and face increased financial stresses; not quite half of all bankruptcies in this country are related to an inability to pay medical care expenses.

Ms. Aragon discussed information related to the difficulty in accessing specialty care services. There is a high demand for specialty health care services on all fronts and it becomes a matter of supply and demand. Exacerbating the issue are the low rates of compensation for those who do provide care to the uninsured; those who do want to serve the uninsured may be financially unable to, based on their own overhead costs and expenses.

Ms. Spisso continued with a discussion of the underinsured, specifically trends at Harborview Medical Center. Harborview has seen a steady increase over the past years in patient transfer volume and patients presenting to its Emergency Department and walk-in clinics. These patients present a wide variety of clinical needs and severity of symptoms, with the top need being access to specialty care services. This is typical for patients who are uninsured but also presents a problem for those covered by Medicaid. As the rate of reimbursement available to hospitals and providers for care of these individuals continues to decrease, the uninsured and those covered by Medicaid are coming from far-reaching regions of the State to Harborview for care.

Ms. Wilson presented a broader picture of the issue of those without health insurance. In terms of the overall uninsured rate, Washington is pretty average when compared to other states. Unfortunately the number of the uninsured in Washington is increasing and statistics show that this is not an issue just based on population increase but a systemic problem, indicating that something is wrong with the methods used to get coverage to people. These statements are true not only for the State as a whole, but in King County as well. While affordability is a huge issue with regards to accessing health insurance, initiatives from the Governor's Office to get all kids covered by 2010, the Small Business Assist Program, and the development of health care initiatives for quality expansion and cost containment are a positive start to changing the present situation.

Chair Edmonds urged the Board and the Department to develop and consider policy initiatives, in partnership with schools or other forums for public outreach, in support of the Governor's initiative to cover all kids by 2010. Chair Edmonds requested a briefing by County lobbyist, Mr. Tom Bristow, regarding legislative activity surrounding the issue of the uninsured. Chair Edmonds wanted the Board to focus on issues of disparity in mental health care and long-term care and public health financing. With regard to federal involvement, Chair Edmonds requested that the Board's federal lobbying agenda include specific federal action to alleviate the issue of the uninsured. Chair Edmonds also asked staff to research the costs of King County purchasing Basic Health Plan coverage or Basic Health sponsorship for uninsured County residents.

## **12. Presentation of recommendations to the Overweight Prevention Panel**

Kirsten Wysen, Policy Analyst, Public Health-Seattle & King County introduced the panel: Barbara Bruemmer, Center for Public Health Nutrition, University of Washington; Willie Austin, Co-

Founder, Austin Foundation; Barbara Wright, Assistant Division Director, Environmental Health Services, Public Health-Seattle & King County; and Matias Valenzuela, Public Education Coordinator, Public Health-Seattle & King County.

Ms. Wysen continued with an overview of the prevalence of obesity, stating that the issue has become one of quality of life, not just one of convenience or esthetics. Obesity and overweight are associated with significant health problems, lower quality of life, greater disease, a greater severity of diseases for both adults and children, and significant costs for employers and the health care system in terms of treating these more severe conditions.

Ms. Bruemmer spoke on behalf of the nutrition work, which is focusing on schools as potential model worksites and assisting school districts with the development and implementation of nutrition and physical activity policies. Ms. Bruemmer acknowledged Chair Edmonds's support of the group's effort, writing a letter to all school districts offering technical assistance in crafting nutrition and physical activity policies required by Senate Bill 5486 to be in place by August 1, 2005.

Mr. Austin spoke on behalf of the physical activity work group, which is focused on supporting the implementation of safe routes to schools to encourage students to walk or bike to school as well as the utilization of school and community center facilities after hours for physical activity efforts.

Ms. Wright spoke on behalf of the community design workgroup. One of the group's first efforts is support of the completion of missing pedestrian and bicycle links within King County. The group will also be developing a checklist of standards for active community design for urban planners.

Mr. Valenzuela concluded the panel's presentation, speaking on behalf of the communication strategies work group, which is developing messages to promote nutrition and physical activity, reducing screen time (i.e. time spent in front of the television and computer screen) and reasonable portion size.

13. Adjournment

Chair Edmonds adjourned the meeting at 12:29 PM.

KING COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

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CAROLYN EDMONDS, CHAIR

DATE

