

Jan. 28th 2021 Okanogan CHI 2020 Meeting Minutes

Part 1: Housing (12 - 1:15)

- *Nancy Nash Mendez, Executive Director Okanogan Housing Authority:*
 - Nancy shared key findings from 2020 Okanogan Housing Needs study, see attached slides.
- *Douglas Marconi Sr., Executive Director Colville Indian Housing Authority:*
- *Panel Discussion:*
 - **Presenters:**
 - OHA: Nancy Nash Mendez
 - OCCAC: Lael Duncan
 - CIHA - Douglas Marconi
 - PBCRC: Grace Larsen & Gene Dowers
 - Methow Housing Trust: Danica Ready
 - Other non panel introduction: Oroville Housing Authority - Ashley Range

Housing Discussion Highlights:

- *Housing Study:*
 - Demand is acute for senior housing as well as one-bedroom units, and the pressure for senior housing is projected to grow substantially
 - The majority of the housing units added to Okanogan County over the past decade have been single-family homes
 - Renting is fairly uncommon as two-thirds of housing households own their own homes (one or two persons, whereas renter households are more likely to include three or more persons)
 - Demand for subsidized housing significantly outpaces existing supply (all units are occupied and there are more than 300 people on the waiting lists for various properties).
 - The burden of housing costs land the hardest on those who are extremely low-income and very low-income
 - Brewster is the most housing cost-burdened community, though Oroville, Omak, and the Methow Valley also have a large share of housing cost-burdened households
- Colville Indian Housing Authority (CIHA)
 - CIHA is planning to conduct a housing study in 2020
 - The Colville Reservation gets its housing funding through a block grant, this funding has flatlined since 2013 though cost of living and housing needs continue to rise

- CIHA manages about 400 units, most clients are above 55, they have a waitlist of more than 200 people, about 35 employees, and many housing units have extended families in their homes
- The new federal administration committed to engaging more frequently in government-to-government discussions with tribal nations
- CIHA welcomes partnerships with housing entities across the county, the housing needs on the reservation are much like those of other housing authorities

Notes on Next Steps:

- *Building from here:* The CHI will help spread the word as housing partners plan to bring together regional housing leaders and dig into housing solutions in the coming months. More soon! Please let us know if there are more collaborative opportunities you'd like the CHI to be connected to.
- *Regional data and solutions:* The attached housing study includes a summary of housing issues, data, and possible solutions for each region in Okanogan County. **We encourage you to look for your region in the report and share the information with your community.**

Part 2: Vaccines (1:15 - 2:00)

- **Panel Discussion :** North Valley Hospital, John McReynolds; Family Health Centers, Melodie White; Three Rivers Hospital, Scott Graham

How's the Vaccine distribution going?

- Demand for vaccine far exceeds the current supply
- Vaccine distribution has to move at the pace of patient safety, record keeping, second dose tracking, and COVID-19 safety guidelines
- Capacity to distribute the vaccine will increase as healthcare providers increasing pool resources
- [Washington State's vaccine dashboard](#) shows that we are vaccinating at a relatively high rate in OK county - **that's our scoreboard of success**
- New integrated call center through Mid-Valley is a great resource to support those who struggle with the technology of signing up to access the vaccine
- Providers are nervous about the supply, unsure if supply will continue at its current rate
- Partners are encouraged by the excellent collaboration across healthcare system: hospitals and clinics all have different strengths in this moment
- Some patients express frustration when they can't get immediate information about vaccine supply, but providers are also often getting vaccine supply info day-to-day
- There are rarely any side effects from the vaccine; if they occur (very rare), they include sore arm and a low-grade fluish symptoms

Disparities and equity in access to Vaccine:

- Those who don't understand how to navigate the technology that is necessary to sign up for vaccination are less able to access the vaccine (new hotline will help)
- It is possible that people who are latino/hispanic are struggling to get access to the vaccine because of bad information about the vaccine, technology barriers, and cultural norms in which some choose to not "move to the front of the line"
- Those who are more vulnerable to COVID-19 death and serious illness need to be prioritized, providers are planning to go directly to them (rather than ask them to come to healthcare facilities), but outreach to those most vulnerable is difficult when healthcare providers are "holding back the doors" as those who are better able to access to the system strive to get the vaccine
- It is a concern that some people are trying to step to the front of the line, including those from outside of the county and those that might try to use their standing or position to gain access to the vaccine

How can the CHI help?

- Share information about the new call center # for COVID-19 vaccines:
1-866-458-0169
- Reach out to qualifying vulnerable populations, help them get signed up and encourage them to get vaccinated
- Healthcare systems may benefit from volunteers at mass vaccination events