

State Board of Health Policy Committee Meeting
Thursday, August 20, 2026
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Meeting Minutes

Location

Webex Video Conference Recording

Meeting

1. Call to Order
 - a. Members Present: Damon Arnold, Dawn Brown, John Herrmann, Brianne Hobbs, Abel Kho, Susan Swider, Margarita Teran-Garcia
 - b. Members Not Present: N/A
 - c. IDPH Staff Present: Assistant Director Janice Phillips, Elizabeth Butler, Kristina Hamilton, Patricia Montalvo, Allison Nickrent, Matt Smith, Emily Spangler, Gregory Willis
 - d. Guest: David Cross, Karen Phelan, Jeff Workman
2. Public Comment
 - a. N/A
3. New Business
 - a. Policy Chair Comments – Damon Arnold
 - i. Welcome remarks.
 - b. Legislative Updates – Matt Smith/Allison Nickrent
 - i. State Updates – Kristina Hamilton
 - Kristina Hamilton - In the process of identifying next steps for rule making. Also reviewing legislative proposals for the next session. May advance one or two bills during veto session to cleanup language, still in the deciding phases.
 - John Herrmann – Has the department taken a position on the Power Act that is going to be looked at in the fall veto session?
 - Kristina Hamilton – We have not taken a position on the bill.
 - Matt Smith – We are exploring some climate related health impacts. Trying to think about how to mitigate public health impacts from climate change is on the agenda for consideration this year.
 - ii. Federal Updates – Matt Smith
 - Matt Smith –
 - HHS first attempts to change childhood vaccination schedule. Immunization Advisory Committee gave guidance to the State following the American Academy of Pediatrics, vaccination guidelines. This is now enforceable at the State level now. Currently nothing for the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to react to.
 - President Trump has issued a new executive order directing HHS to change the childhood immunization schedule. Want to flag that there is an additional section that instructs the Department of Justice to pursue legal action against states that are infringing upon the religious liberties of individuals by restricting religious exemptions for vaccinations. Currently in the country that is five states, California, Maine, West Virginia, Connecticut, and New York.

- President has appointed a new commissioner for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has not been convened since last fall. ACIP sets recommendations for fall respiratory season, so we are working on figuring that out. With how they set them last year, we should be able to follow this year's respiratory guidance using the federal programming, like Vaccines for Children and the 317 Program.
- FDA just approved a new Messenger Ribonucleic Acid (mRNA) flu vaccine. Trying to better understand how available this vaccine will be and whether or not federal funds will be available to help purchase and distribute, based on the lack of ACIP endorsement. The clinical trials have been promising.
 - Abel Kho – Moderna reached out to several research institutions with an offer to gather real world evidence on the efficacy of the mRNA vaccine and willing to dispense for free or give to institutions that want to participate. This is a world trial, 5000 units of the mRNA vaccines.
 - Matt Smith – will connect with Abel and our Vaccine people if this would be of interest to them.
- Do not have a date set yet but we do expect the Illinois Immunization Advisory Committee to convene before early fall to make sure the State's respiratory guidance is set.
- The end of the federal fiscal year is 30 September, barring congressional action between/by then, we will have another government shutdown. Senate has passed a continuing resolution that allows the government to stay open through 11 December. The House passed a continuing resolution that goes through 4 December. The Senate resolution included explicit language that would pause an Office of Management and Budget (OMB) rule that is about to go into effect. Also allows political appointees to review federal grant making. Keeping a close eye on this.
- IDPH does not administer Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) but childhood nutrition is an important issue so we have been in touch with sister agencies regarding this.
- Announced in cooperation with the Common Coalition and the Open AI Foundation, a new initiative called the Breakthrough. A hundred-million-dollar investment from the Open AI Foundation to help support states and civic operation in a select number of states, to double the treatment rate for Hepatitis C over the next two years. The idea is to integrate AI tools for identification and follow-up of the populations we are trying to serve, as well as ensure that we are getting treatment to the people. Our Office of Disease Control is the lead for this.
- Susan Swider – referring to the Medicaid, the new rules, was the comment period this month? Also, the Justice Department issued a memo on the Olmstead Act (has to do with people with disabilities living in the least restrictive community environments). Is there concern about this within IDPH? The disability rights community is very concerned about it.
 - Allison Nickrent – Olmstead Consent Decree Officer is based out of the Department of Human Services, so that agency is probably more involved than IDPH.

- c. Review Areas of Interest from the Last Meeting
 - i. Damon Arnold – The areas of interest are polystyrene bags/ plastic bag bans, data centers, mistrust in public health workforce/ public health worker recruitment, Hypertension/ high blood pressure (HTN) and chronic kidney disease (CKD) impact prevention, inaccurate blood pressure (BP) measurements, upskilling for Community Health Care Workers (CHW)/Nurses/ Primary Care Medical Providers, unsustainable safety net network healthcare (underserved communities).
- d. Open Discussion of Other Interest Areas
 - i. Damon Arnold – Provided a presentation on the Committee Goals and Questions
 - Create more tangible work products for the broader Board and present for IDPH utilization.
 - Establish subcommittees to refine and/or expand on areas of interest to the committee and generate ideas suggestions on next steps.
 - Subcommittee will report back to the committee at subsequent meetings.
 - Plastic Pellet Control – Public Act 104-0772 added, 415 ILCS 5/12.8 new, Section 12.8- Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan to be included in national pollutant discharge elimination systems. In effect as of 1 January, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) oversees its implementation.
 - Water Fluoridation – Illinois is still using the .7 mg per liter, but recent legislative efforts such as House Bill 4321 and the proposed Fluoridation Local Authority Act, seek to shift control by allowing local public water providers to opt in or out of these state requirements.
 - Blood Pressure Measurement – Key statutes and programs are: High Blood Pressure Control Act (410 ILCS 425/), Heart Disease Early Detection Act (SB3670), Peripheral artery Disease Coverage, Self-Measured Blood Pressure (SMBP)
 - IL HB4759-2023-2024 – 103rd General Assembly – this is a dead bill but there are some new bills that are trying to look at this, it amends the Medical Assistance Article of the Illinois Public Aid Code. Certain self-measured blood pressure monitoring services involving patient education and training on the set-up and use of SMBP device and self-measurement data collection shall be covered and reimbursed under the medical assistance program. Wants the legislative team to look at this.
 - Dispelling misinformation and disinformation regarding vaccinations. Generate community specific messaging.
 - Healthcare System Safety Nets / Underserved Communities
 - Complex problem and labor intensive.
 - ii. Membership questions raised concerning the content of the presentation
 - Susan Swider –
 - On the topic of mistrust from the public, recommendations were made from the main State Board of Health (SBOH) meeting about two years ago. Whatever came of that?
 - On the topic of Safety Nets, this subcommittee spent a lot of time on this issue when Dr. Phillips and Dr. Vohra were on the Board. Should revisit that information and lean on Dr. Vohra. Will look for the documents and get it out to the committee.
 - Damon Arnold – What kind of research does the agency want us to do? What product is wanted of the committee?
 - John Herrmann – willing to put together a paper on polystyrene containers and alternatives. Really look at the sourcing and also the economics of it.

- Margarita Teran-Garcia – there have been several surveys and reports regarding upskilling CHW, but what is the plan for those policies? Would be interested in participating in this.
 - Allison Nickrent – Regarding the policy around CHW, the rules address what the program will look like so CHW's can be certified. We do have a CHW Review Board, it is a separate Board from the SBOH. That meeting is a public meeting, so anyone is welcome to attend and provide public comments.
 - Damon Arnold – possibly bring in the Chronic Disease section, to discuss what the Board can do to help bring data together, approaches of sending recommendations to them, put together a paper for them.
 - Janice Phillips –
 - The next CHW Board meeting is on 30 October at 2:00 PM. They have a website where you can find meeting minutes, their annual report, and get updates.
 - Part of a workgroup that is working on building the public's trust. Will look back on the document from 2024 for this.
 - Safety Net hospitals, might want to suggest Director Vohra gives an update on where we are on this. IDPH has been monitoring it very closely.
 - Alternatives to polystyrene, consider what type of messaging can be given to the public around this and think about lower income populations.
 - Damon Arnold – going to send out the four discussed interest areas. What is the best way to approach a separate committee for these topics? Possibility to have a two-hour meeting with break-out rooms and then come back for the second hour to discuss?
 - Allison Nickrent – Do not recommend a shared document with more than two people. Partner work is great, anything greater than that requires a scheduled meeting. We always want to follow the letter of the law when it comes to the Open Meetings Act but also the intent of the law. Recommendation is still to not have small groups to ensure all work is occurring in the view of the public.
 - Susan Swider – Three months is too long to go between meetings.
 - Karen Phelan – Committee can schedule a meeting in the interim if it feels necessary.
 - John Herrmann – what are the rules on public facing correspondence, (ie, a commentary in Chicago attribute where State Board of Health Illinois is the author)?
 - Karen Phelan – this initiative has never been taken before.
4. Old Business
- a. N/A
5. 2026 Meetings
- a. State Board of Health – 11:00 AM – 1:30 PM
 - i. September 3
 - ii. December 10
 - b. State Board of Health Rules Committee – 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
 - i. November 5
 - c. State Board of Health Policy Committee – 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
 - i. November 12
6. Adjournment
- a. Damon Arnold motioned to adjourn at 2:49 PM.