

# Whatcom Community Health Workers' Network

## General Membership Meeting Notes

April 24, 2020

By Zoom Call

### Present:

Ana Lopez, Community Health Plan of WA, North Sound region  
Andrea Tafoya, Ferndale School District  
Ari Wright, Communities in Schools  
Carmina Cisneros Garcia, Villa Santa Fe  
Danny Aguilera – Labor and Industries  
David Roehn, SeaMar  
Elizabeth Abbott, NW Youth Services  
Elma Degollado, SeaMar  
Gabriela Cardona, Sea Mar  
Greg Arnold, North Sound Accountable Community of Health (NSACH)  
Gurpreet Bajwa, SeaMar  
Jessica Mata, SeaMar  
Katrina Goering, SeaMar Promotores program  
Katy Hetterle, Molina - Whatcom and Skagit  
Laura Reardon, Unity Care NW  
Mahali Serna, SeaMar  
Mary Jo Durborow, Arc of Whatcom County  
Megan Stephenson, Unity Care NW  
Rochelle Hollowell, CHW East County  
Samantha Gailey, Sea Mar  
Stephanie Foster, NW Regional Council  
Tess O'Reilly, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services (DVSAS)  
Tiffany Peterson, DSHS, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

### Welcome and Introductions

Megan welcomed the group, and let everyone know that the meeting was being recorded. This will help with taking minutes, and also with exploring the option of having these kinds of meetings in the future.

Participants did introductions in virtual chat rooms, sharing “the last thing that made you laugh.”

Report out: Many people are working from home, working to adapt and adjust, lots of Zoom calls.

Things that are making us laugh: cats, dogs, kids, grandkids, calls with family far away, garden, comedy (movies, videos, and jokes).

😊 Recommended: Ben's state roundtable series. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ci0\\_tF3wffc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ci0_tF3wffc) 😊

### Outreach/Education Funding Opportunity

Megan talked about a funding opportunity from the state Dept of Health called Emergency Language Services Outreach Contract. It's to educate and share materials about COVID-19 for marginalized communities – those with less access to information and more likely to be disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Is this something Network members could do within their regular jobs? Or perhaps some CHWs who aren't employed right now? First step of applying is filling out an info sheet, which looks pretty simple. Work would need to be done by the end of July. Funding could pay for media, printing – not sure if it would also pay for people?

Mary Jo said the ARC also looking at applying. She wondered if the CHW Network were to apply if the work would fall mostly to the leadership team, since the Network doesn't have very frequent contact.

Rochelle said this would be helpful in East County where communities don't have as much access to up to date information. US postal service mailing could be a good option. Social media is harder because of limited cell

phone reception, and internet is not reliable. Rochelle thinks about 30-40% of people have internet access. Language barriers are also an issue.

Katrina reported that SeaMar has applied. If they get the contract, some of funds are intended for radio broadcasting, some for the promotores program. They are already making lower-literacy educational flyers, videos in indigenous languages, and trying a Facebook page and texting group. She's unsure if SeaMar were to get the contract, if it would be for the whole SeaMar system, or just some counties. They would love to share resources they have or new ones they create.

Greg said there has a lot of discussion within individual health depts in the north sound region about applying. He's concerned that the total funding amount for the whole state is only \$500,000 and there could be a lot of competition. If a lot of Whatcom organizations apply, it's unlikely they would all be funded, and the amounts would be small.

Lara said that having consistent messaging/info is important and could be hard without good coordination. Maybe if another organization coordinated it, the Network could help with outreach or distribution.

Mary Jo asked if the East County Resource Network apply could apply, to focus on a more targeted area. Rochelle said the E Co Resource Center is run by the Opportunity Council, and she's not aware of an application from them.

What is local health dept doing? Do they already have materials we could use?  
It's a short application timeline – we could assist another organization, once we know if there is a Whatcom organization that gets a contract.

Megan stated that the Coordinating Committee would discuss more, and asked everyone to please email or use the chat to share other thoughts or opinions.

### **“Mad Tea Party” Zoom Discussion**

Megan and Greg introduced the “Mad Tea Party” activity, which uses the Zoom chat function to share thoughts and information about specific questions. It's a good way to get a lot of feedback quickly. Megan will put it a question, wait about a minute for everyone to write in their response, and then everyone hits enter at the same time and the responses will all show up where everyone can see them.

### **QUESTION: What is the biggest work change because of COVID?**

#### **CHAT RESPONSES:**

**Daniel E. Aguilera:** Telecommute.

**Greg Arnold:** Partners don't have time to communicate needs to us, don't even fully understand their needs.

**Tess O'Reilly:** Not being able to communicate with clients face-to-face has been a very large barrier. Many of the folks I work with do not have safe phone or internet access, therefore I have been unable to maintain communication with them and are unsure on whether they are getting their needs met or not.

**Laura Reardon:** Working some from home and not getting to see my clients and co-workers face to face- trying to do outreach with people who don't have phones has been interesting.

**Katy Hetterle:** No face to face visits with my clients.

**Katrina Goering:** Not being able to meet with the promotores in person and learning together as a team how to communicate almost exclusively via phone and text.

**Lara Welker:** Having my daughter and husband home all the time. :)

**Mary Jo Durborow:** Less direct contact with the families we serve, interruptions at home (time management is challenging).

**Jessica & Mahali:** 1. exposed to catching COVID (scary); 2. Hours being reduced & some benefits changed; 3. Outreach cancelled.

**Tiffany Peterson:** Not having answers/solutions for our customers who feel hopeless and afraid about things like housing, food, bills, and what happens next/the future.

**Elizabeth Abbott:** Not meeting clients face to face.

**Stephanie F:** Not working in the same room as my team members to readily bounce ideas and information off of - in ADR we each have one day a week that we are the sole person answering phones.

**Tess O'Reilly:** National Network to End Domestic Violence <https://nnedv.org/> or (202) 543-5566

#### DISCUSSION:

- Megan and Laura at UCNW are reassigned to pharmacy, doing less outreach.
- Andrea – Ferndale school district (migrant student program), having to be creative in connecting with families, and connecting them to resources, whole different ball game in your living room.
- Ari – At Shuksan Middle School. At first limitations seemed big, slowly getting different platforms, every week brings new changes and policies, now feels more relaxed and new opportunities grow through the weeks.

#### QUESTION: Resource lists – overwhelming? Know where to go? what's missing?

##### CHAT RESPONSES:

**Daniel E. Aguilera:** There are different lists that different groups have put together.

**Tiffany Peterson:** I've made and keep updating a resource google document that I organized by topic with a table of contents. For me at least that's been easier than trying to follow multiple lists all at once so instead I link to primary sources and update as needed.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nGqxIMfmezLBA2CSMTk4usDqRnEaMJhBual9nwY61Zw/edit?usp=sharing>

Is the Internet Essentials a resource that's been discussed at all for folks who don't have internet access?

<https://www.internetessentials.com/>

**Mary Jo Durborow:** Missing: we have found some resources for the deaf and blind, wish there were more. finding visual messaging for our cognitively impaired adults

**Ana Lopez:** Resources available to undocumented! where to go? public charge info. a lot of people scare to access resources :(

**Stephanie F:** I'm finding sometimes agencies are duplicating resource lists (or certain parts) and updates to these lists vary.

**Jessica & Mahali:** [Health Dept] website is easy to navigate. It's all labeled out and well explained.

**Laura Reardon:** I do feel like there are a lot of resources getting sent out from a lot of places which can feel like a lot sometimes. I do find the Unified Command website helpful and the resources sent out through the CRN with food resource updates etc. I have a couple people who have asked me about resources for small businesses, which I honestly don't really have the answer to.

**Greg Arnold:** Overwhelming, we have staff checking a lot of resources and on a lot of webinars to collect information.

**Lara Welker:** Info is changing all the time - evolution of resources available, hard to keep up!

**Katy Hetterle:** Whatcom and Skagit Health Departments both have an excellent COVID-19 website and info in different languages.

**Katrina Goering:** We've received some questions about internet for families so that their kids can connect to their teachers and school. I haven't been able to direct them well yet so thank you Tess for sharing the information about internet resources!

**Carmina:** I need cloth masks for the residents.

**Tess O'Reilly:** As working with clients I have had to make direct calls to other community care providers to "hear from the source" how they're providing services.

**Katrina Goering:** Here's an amazing google doc resource list that Tanya Rojas (Migrant Out-of-School Youth/Health Coordinator Northwest Educational Service District) put together

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Gh2sBWqioWoPuSliAmWfA-3jiMkiQQmAiXMZ2\\_rwoiM/edit#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Gh2sBWqioWoPuSliAmWfA-3jiMkiQQmAiXMZ2_rwoiM/edit#gid=0)

**Tiffany Peterson:** The Whatcom Unified Command and Opportunity Council have been trying with mixed success.

**Stephanie F:** Opportunity Council has a great master list of resources for COVID

**Ari Wright (She/Her):** Communities In Schools Whatcom-Skagit is updating google sheets daily and it is pretty extensive. Would love to share - it is organized by different counties. Here are some great links for Migrant workers [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Gh2sBWqioWoPuSliAmWfA-3jiMkiQQmAiXMZ2\\_rwoiM/edit#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Gh2sBWqioWoPuSliAmWfA-3jiMkiQQmAiXMZ2_rwoiM/edit#gid=0)

**Stephanie F:** Whatcom COVID-19 Helpers: <https://www.whatcomhelpers.org/>

**Tiffany Peterson:** Bellingham Covid-19 Community Helpers (FB Group)  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/bellinghamcovid19helpers/>

#### DISCUSSION:

- Figuring out where the resources are, so we know where to go.
- Put our own list together? Tiffany [Peterson] willing to help. Send email to network with google doc. Info changes quickly. Check if websites, lists are evolving. Hard to keep up to date.
- Having the OppCO be the info keepers and aggregators would be preferable. Even though their time and resources are strained, it's the closest thing to "keeper of info" (even before COVID).
- Our network can pull together, if we see info missing, we can get out to OppCo, maybe Health Dept if appropriate, Whatcom Unified Command, use people we know there to make intros.
- COVID testing: there are multiple testing sites, but everyone has to have provider referral. The channel is for people to first talk with their provider; if they don't have primary care provider, county Health Dept does have testing by appointment (drive up, don't get out of car).
- COVID-19 Helpers Facebook group, also now a hotline and website. [www.Whatcomhelpers.org](http://www.Whatcomhelpers.org). They might be able to provide masks. You can post specific needs, and they can coordinate delivery of food and other supplies. City specific in area, also Whatcom. Remember to be careful about what's on Facebook, check sources, watch commentary.

#### QUESTION: What do you need in terms of mental health support?

##### CHAT RESPONSES:

**Laura Reardon:** What helps me is getting out in nature (a safe distance from others :))

**Greg Arnold:** Connection to others in these types of meetings, sharing resources and stories

**Ana Lopez:** a place to unload! I am grateful my team has done a group text where we communicate with each other just to unload all of our emotions!

**Katy Hetterle:** My family and the great outdoors.

**Stephanie F:** More resources for older adults feeling isolated in their homes or care facilities.

**Tess O'Reilly:** Being able to stay connected is huge!

**Tiffany Peterson:** To feel like I can be of service and help to my community. My agency at upper levels is stalled and treading water and that is increasing my anxiety. I want to make a positive difference.

**Lara Welker:** it's good to connect with other people like this!

**Jessica & Mahali:** 1. God 2. Face-to-face Interaction (help each other). 3. Exercising

**Katrina Goering:** We'd love to have some guided meditations or relaxation scripts in Spanish if anyone knows of any to do with our team!

**Mary Jo Durborow:** connection with family who are far away. Dealing with my brother's likely passing on soon- I can't be there, so maybe grief counseling.

**Andrea Tafoya:** Connections, and communication

**Greg Arnold:** <https://www.groupgreeting.com/>- to send a "card" that everyone signs

**Stephanie F:** University of WA Memory & Brain Wellness Center is doing some great webinars!  
<https://depts.washington.edu/mbwc/events/community-events-programs>

#### DISCUSSION:

- Dealing with grief. People are experiencing grief, loss, sadness, anger as part of the whole experience.
- Needing resources for older adults, esp those in care facilities. If still need help, reach out.
- Tiffany has a co-worker and they want to connect more, but not direction the agency's going in, frustrating and isolating.

- Mary Jo works with a small team, some have small kids at home, don't know how they're doing it. Co-workers are support network, couldn't ask for more in terms of work support.
- Katy says Molina been really supportive toward employees, daily huddles, remote thru May 29, no face to face with clients.
- Greg: ACH is doing creative things, contributed to basket for new mom, cards for birthdays, snapchat for goofy things, increased one-on-one connections, Zoom happy hour with trivia.
- Reach out to your network if you need something or just to connect with group of peers.
- I miss hugging.
- Family far away, it's been a rough time.

## What I hope can happen is...

### CHAT RESPONSES:

**Mary Jo Durborow:** Real in person hugging will be a thing in less than a year.

**Ari Wright (She/Her):** CHANGE! I don't want to go back to "normal" because normal wasn't working for everyone in this society.

**Stephanie F:** that we can all find more silver linings :)

**Andrea Tafoya:** that we all find ways to feel connected and supported and able to have a safe way to get back into our community.

**Greg Arnold:** Positive changes/flexibility to rules and regulations can stay after COVID

**Katy Hetterle:** Return to normal life when it is safe for all.

**Tess O'Reilly:** What I hope can happen is that our community members can have access to safe places. I also hope that this pandemic experience can shine light on the gaps we have in our community and we can strengthen those bonds once things are back to "normal"

**Tiffany Peterson (They/Them):** Developing connections with the folks in this group to increase resource sharing, cooperation between agencies/organizations, etc. I hope that our society as a whole sees the value of empathy and connection

**Katrina Goering:** We can continue prioritizing and strengthening relationships throughout COVID-19 (with promotores and outside of work!)

**Carmina:** Is that this situation ends soon! Because in Villa Sta Fe we have many vulnerable people who are going to need maybe mental help and support!

**Lara Welker:** I hope we all realize more deeply how important human connections are and how we can support those - formally and informally.

### DISCUSSION:

- Some things we want to stick around. COVID situation is shining light on a lot of gaps, things we've all seen in our work and in our own lives. People have always needed living wage and safe place and child care, we don't want it to go away when things are 'normal.'
- It's like these gaps we know exist are finally being a little more brought to the surface. It's up to us to keep it out there, don't let it fall in the shadows.
- Hope situation ends soon.

### Follow up and next steps:

- Like the CHW Network on Facebook!
- The group agreed to have another Zoom call in 2 weeks to share resources, creative ideas, support. Megan will send an invite.
- Megan will send out compiled resource list.

**Thank you all for coming!**