



**Task Force of Border Health Officials (TFBHO) Meeting
HHSC Virtual Platform
July 7, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Member Name	Yes	No	Professional Representatives (non-members)
Esmeralda Guajardo, MAHS	✓		
Richard Chamberlain, DrPH, MPH, RS	✓		
Steven M. Kotsatos, RS, CPM	✓		
Shannon Harvill		✓	
Eduardo Olivarez	✓		
Arturo Rodriguez, DNP, MPH, CPM	✓		
Hector Ocaranza, MD, MPH	✓		
Emilie Prot, DO, MPH		✓	
Lillian Ringsdorf, MD, MPH	✓		
Rachel E. Sonne, MD, MPH	✓		
State Representative Bobby Guerra		✓	Represented by Jasmine Owen
Senator Eddie Lucio Jr.		✓	

Attendees Present

Francesca Kupper, John Chacon, Karin Hopkins, John Villarreal, Jasmine Owen, Kayla Kates-Brown, Jacqueline Thompson, Jennifer Moore, Dr. Allison Banicki, Cassandra Urrutia, Alberto Perez, Rafael Alberti, Úrsula Solórzano, Adriana Luevanos, Rosy De los Santos, Michael De Leon, and Ashley Doyle.

Agenda Item I: Call to Order, Welcome, Chair Remarks, Meeting Logistics and TFBHO Roll Call

Chair Olivarez welcomed attendees to the Task Force of Border Health Officials (TFBHO) meeting. He commenced the meeting at 1:01 pm. He asked Ms. Francesca Kupper to initiate the roll call. She provided logistical announcements and proceeded with the roll call. She confirmed that the meeting was two members short to provide a quorum and let Chair Olivarez know that he could continue with the meeting but could not move toward any action items or voting until a quorum was established. As Chair Olivarez continued with the meeting, two additional members virtually identified themselves. Ms. Kupper confirmed that a quorum had been established and Chair Olivarez continued with the meeting. He thanked Jasmine Owen for attending on behalf of State Representative Bobby Guerra and asked if representatives from Senator Lucio’s staff or legislative staff were present. He moved on to the next agenda item as no other legislative staff were present.



Agenda Item II: Consideration of May 25, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Chair Olivarez asked members to review the May 25, 2022 Meeting Minutes and ask if and edits were needed. Dr. Chamberlain initiated a motion to approve the minutes with a second motion from Dr. Ocaranza. Chair Olivarez asked Ms. Kupper to initiate a roll call vote to approve the meeting minutes. The motion carried and the minutes were approved. She turned the meeting back to Chair Olivarez.

Before moving to the next agenda item, Chair Olivarez asked members and Ms. Kupper if a consensus decision could be made to skip to other action items in the interest of time and quorum status. Ms. Kupper encouraged him to ask presenters (Mr. Aragon and Dr. Allison Banicki) if they would mind presenting after the action items were completed. There were no issues with presenters and Chair Olivarez moved to agenda item five and explained they'd come back to Agenda Items three and four.

Ms. Kupper let Chair Olivarez know that Ms. Emer Guajardo from Cameron County joined the meeting. Mr. John Chacon confirmed that there was a delay in her camera. Ms. Guajardo apologized for her tardiness and confirmed that she could hear and view the meeting clearly although her camera function was either delayed or not operable. Ms. Kupper reminded members that a roll call vote is required for action items that require a vote and turned the meeting back to Chair Olivarez. He thanked Ms. Guajardo for attending and presenters for their patience and continued with the meeting by moving on to Agenda Item five.

Agenda Item V: Vote to approve Subcommittees Recommendations

Chair Olivarez asked members to review the submitted recommendations packet. He asked for a motion to accept the recommendations packet. Mr. Steven Kotsatos made the first motion while Dr. Richard Chamberlain seconded the motion. Mr. John Chacon confirmed that there were no public comments received for this agenda item. Ms. Kupper initiated a roll call vote; the recommendations were approved. Chair Olivarez thanked members for their approval and moved to agenda item six.

**Agenda Item VI: Final Review and consideration of TFBHO
Recommendations Report (due by November 1, 2022)**

Chair Olivarez asked members to review the final Recommendations Report, which includes the approved recommendations. He proceeded to review the report with all members. Comments were shared about strategies to support the recommendations. Mr. John Villarreal mentioned that strategies and actions to support the recommendations usually take place in the odd-numbered years when reports aren't due, initiating more initiative-based meetings. Chair also recognized that a staff member from Senator Blanco's Office was present. Ms. Cassandra Urrutia, District and Legislative Director for Senator Cesar Blanco's Office thanked members for their work and stated she looked forward to working with them. Chair Olivarez thanked her for attending the meeting and continued to review the report. Karin Hopkins mentioned that details such as names, titles, and acronym lists,



etc. will be revised to ensure completeness prior to submission. Chair Olivarez asked for additional comments or discussion regarding the report. He asked for a motion to accept the Recommendations Report. Mr. Kotsatos made the first motion while Dr. Rachel Sonne seconded the motion. He asked Ms. Kupper to initiate a roll call vote to approve the report. The motion carried and Chair Olivarez thanked members, DSHS staff and others for their collaborative efforts. He moved to agenda item three.

Agenda Item III: Update: COVID-19 Vaccines and boosters

After voting of action items took place, Chair Olivarez returned to Agenda Item three and thanked Mr. Tony Aragon, Immunization Unit Director (DSHS) for his patience in waiting to provide the COVID-19 Vaccine and booster update.

Mr. Aragon started his update by stating that 45.8 million people have received at least one dose, which equates to approximately 70 percent of Texans. More than 17 million Texans have been fully vaccinated with two or more doses. We have a lot of work to do regarding booster doses because only seven million people have received at least one booster dose. The following figures refer to booster doses in Texas by age group:

Age Group:

5-11: 2% boosted (26% fully vaccinated)
12-15: 10% boosted (60% fully vaccinated)
16-49: 20% boosted (65% fully vaccinated)
50-64: 39% boosted (more than 80% fully vaccinated)
65-79: 58% boosted (more than 80% fully vaccinated)
80+: 53% boosted (more than 80% fully vaccinated)

Chair Olivarez and Mr. Aragon agreed that Covid fatigue and vaccine hesitancy has played a role in decreased numbers of booster doses. Additionally, Novavax, a new vaccine, is coming on the market at the end of the summer. Mr. Aragon stated that we want to increase vaccine confidence because many people have a lot of questions about the vaccines regarding what's it made of and its safety, etc.) We want to provide as much education to our medical providers and to the public to make one-on-one patient/doctor visits as successful as possible.

The pediatric rollout took place on June 20 for children between the ages of 6 months – 4 years. We didn't see a large increase in the first wave, followed by a second wave of doses. Texas received approximate 400,000 doses but only 25,000 children received at least 1 dose. We didn't see a large amount of provider orders as we had expected. We hope those numbers increase soon. We typically experience an increase in orders from urban areas but not so much in rural areas. We want everyone to know that there is no vaccine shortage; we have ample supply. We're currently focusing on "back-to-school" vaccines to ensure all students are up to date on all recommended vaccines.

Dr. Rodriguez asked Mr. Aragon about the strategy of the new Novavax vaccine. Mr. Aragon stated that he doesn't have a lot of information on it from the CDC, FDA, and other entities.



We'll probably receive more information on Novavax next month. Chair Olivarez asked if there were other questions from other members and thanked Mr. Aragon for his update and moved on to the next agenda item.

Agenda Item IV: Presentation: Border Health Data Overview

Chair Olivarez introduced Dr. Allision Banicki, Border Epidemiologist, DSHS. She explained this was an updated presentation of data she introduced in 2018, when the TFBHO was studying which border health priorities they'd focus on. She also mentioned that it was a partial update focusing on demographics and communicable diseases. The demographics portion of the update will detail population rates, foreign birth and language use, age structure, poverty rates and educational attainment. For the communicable diseases portion of the presentation will include data on Tuberculosis, HIV, vaccine preventable diseases as well as foodborne and waterborne diseases.

Chair Olivarez thanked Dr. Banicki for her presentation and asked if members had questions or comments for her. Several members thanked her for her presentation. Some members had questions about the timeliness of disease diagnoses due to recent concentrations on the pandemic. She answered questions regarding case rates, diagnoses, and data suppression and a possible resurgence of different data. She also let members know that she'd share the presentation with them.

Chair Olivarez asked members if they needed the break or if they could skip the break and move on to the next agenda item. Members agreed to continue with the meeting.

Agenda Item VII: Final Review of Report of Actions Taken by the TFBHO (due by September 1, 2022)

Chair Olivarez presented Mr. Villarreal and Ms. Hopkins. Mr. Villarreal shared that the report's submission date is September 1, 2022 and presented the different portions of the report. Ms. Hopkins and Mr. Villarreal assured members that the same titles and acronyms from the recommendations report will be corrected in this report. Additionally, Chair Olivarez announced that the August 26, 2022 meeting will be cancelled. Mr. Villarreal explained that because today's meeting was being held, that fulfilled the quarterly requirement, which led to Chair Olivarez' decision to cancel the August meeting. Ms. Hopkins thanked Chair Olivarez, Vice-chair Rodriguez and all members for their collaboration and stated that bot reports would be submitted prior to the submission deadlines for the public and legislators to review ahead of schedule. Chair Olivarez asked if members had any questions or comments. Hearing none, he thanked them and proceeded with the meeting.

Agenda Item VIII: Public comment

Chair Olivarez asked Ms. Kupper if any public comments were submitted. She confirmed that no public comments were submitted.



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Agenda Item IX: Closing remarks, thank you and adjourn

Chair Olivarez thanked all members for attending the meeting. He asked members and all attendees if there were any last remarks before closing the meeting and reminded members that the August meeting has been cancelled. Mr. Villarreal mentioned that the October 13th won't be held at the Winters Building; it will be held at DSHS main campus in meeting room K-100 and the December meeting will be held in the Winters Building. Chair Olivarez adjourned the meeting at 3:05 p.m. and the production staff announced they ended the recording.