



**TEXAS**

Health and Human  
Services

Texas Department of State  
Health Services

**Task Force of Border Health Officials (TFBHO)  
APPROVED Meeting Minutes  
1:00 p.m., April 9, 2025**

**Physical Location: Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)  
Robert D. Moreton Building, Room M-100, First Floor  
1100 49<sup>th</sup> Street, Austin, Texas 78756**

**TEAMS Virtual/Hybrid Meeting**

Table 1: TFBHO attendance at the April 9, 2025, meeting.

MEMBER NAME	YES	NO	MEMBER NAME	YES	NO
Dr. Richard Chamberlain	X		Dr. Arturo Rodriguez (Chair)	X	
Ms. Esmeralda Guajardo	X		Ms. Dairen Sarmiento Rangel	X	
The Honorable State Representative Bobby Guerra (Ex Officio)		X	Dr. Veerinder Taneja (Vice-Chair)	X	
Ms. Shannon Harvill	X		Mr. Niko Tapangan	X	
Mr. Steven M. Kotsatos	X		Ms. Nancy P. Treviño	X	
Dr. Emilie Prot	X		VACANT (Ex Officio)		
Dr. Lillian Ringsdorf	X		VACANT		

**Agenda Item 1: Call to order, welcome, Chair remarks, meeting logistics, and roll call**

Dr. Arturo Rodriguez, Chair, convened the TFBHO meeting at 1:00 p.m., and welcomed attendees. Ms. Francesca Kupper, Program Specialist, Advisory Committee Coordination Office (ACCO), Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), provided logistical announcements, conducted the roll call, and noted a quorum was present.

**Agenda Item 2: Consideration of February 12, 2025, draft meeting minutes**

Dr. Rodriguez called for any edits or changes to the February 12, 2025, draft meeting minutes. Receiving no edits or changes, Dr. Rodriguez called for a motion to approve the draft.

**MOTION:**

Mr. Steven Kotsatos moved to approve the February 12, 2025, draft meeting minutes as written. Dr. Richard Chamberlain seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved with no nays nor abstentions.

**Agenda Item 3: Wastewater surveillance in Laredo**

Dr. Chamberlain, Public Health Department Director, City of Laredo, reviewed the PowerPoint presentation (PPT) titled, "Laredo Public Health Wastewater Surveillance". Key points included:

- Anyone can access online the weekly information in English and Spanish about 19 pathogens, five substances and three treatments.
- In addition to the collection of wastewater surveillance data, the Laredo Public Health Department partnered with Police and Fire Departments to implement educational efforts in specific areas that led to a 52% reduction in overdose deaths by the end of the year.

- For those locations that want to start wastewater surveillance, is it recommended to reach out to the National Council Wastewater Surveillance System for information.

#### **Agenda Item 4: Challenges to TB control in the border region**

Dr. Blanca Restrepo, Professor of Epidemiology, University of Texas Health Houston School of Public Health, Brownsville Regional Campus, reviewed the PPT titled, "Challenges to tuberculosis control in the border region". Highlights included:

- Tuberculosis (TB) is the main microbial killer worldwide.
- Both types of diabetes mellitus are drivers for TB. The relationship between diabetes and TB may be more important than TB to HIV or COVID-19.
- Studies show that obesity can initially protect against TB; but when a person with obesity develops diabetes, they become more vulnerable to TB infections.

#### **Agenda Item 5: Discussion and update about TFBHO next steps**

Mr. Guillermo Zenizo Lindsey, Binational Communications Coordinator, OBPH, DSHS, reviewed the PPT titled, "Discussion about Next Steps", to guide TFBHO members through discussions about the scope of the border data they want to be presented to them, whether to count ex officio members when determining a quorum, and an open discussion about the TFBHO next steps.

#### **MOTION:**

Dr. Chamberlain moved to receive only information for the 16 counties immediately adjacent to the international boundary, as defined as the "Texas border region" by the Texas Health and Safety Code, and no longer use the U.S.-Mexico La Paz Agreement definition for the "Texas border region" which included 32 counties within 62 miles of the border. Ms. Esmeralda Guajardo seconded the motion. The motion was approved with nine yeas (R. Chamberlain, E. Guajardo, S. Harvill, D. Rangel, L. Ringsdorf, A. Rodriguez, V. Taneja, N. Tapangan, N. Treviño), one nay (E. Prot), and no abstentions.

#### **MOTION:**

Dr. Chamberlain moved to define that ex-officio members are not counted when determining whether a quorum is present. Dr. Emilie Prot seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved with no nays nor abstentions.

#### **Agenda Item 6. Public comment**

No public comment was received.

#### **Agenda Item 7: Closing remarks, thank you, and adjourn**

Dr. Rodriguez adjourned the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

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***Please click on the link to the archived HHSC video to view, and listen to, the entirety of the April 9, 2025, Task Force of Border Health Officials (TFBHO) meeting; this video will be available for approximately two years from the date the meeting video is posted in accordance with the HHSC records retention schedule:***

**[Task Force of Border Health Officials \(TFBHO\)](#)**