



**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., August 13, 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 August 13, 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. Dr. Rodriguez requested a minute of silence for the victims of recent flooding events in Central Texas.

**Agenda Item 2: Consideration of June 11, 2025, draft meeting minutes**

Dr. Rodriguez called for any edits or changes to the June 11, 2025, draft meeting minutes. Receiving no edits or changes, Dr. Rodriguez called for a motion to approve the draft.

**MOTION:**

Dr. Veerinder Taneja moved to approve the June 11, 2025, draft meeting minutes as written. Ms. Shannon Harvill seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved with no nays nor abstentions.

**Agenda Item 3: Recognition of outgoing Chair, Dr. Arturo Rodriguez**

Dr. Jennifer Shuford, DSHS Commissioner, provided recognition of outgoing TFBHO Chair Dr. Rodriguez and thanked him for his service to the people of Texas.

**Agenda Item 4: 89<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session update**

Mr. Daniel Knapp, Government Affairs Specialist, DSHS, reviewed the PPT titled, "TFBHO Legislative Update". The presentation included the budget & exceptional items for DSHS and selected bill highlights. The highlighted bills were related to the modification of the Texas border region definition (HB 1240) which would increase the number of TFBHO members, as well as the total THC ban for hemp, Make Texas Healthy Again, vaccine & immunizations, electronic health records, and rural health stabilization and innovation.

**Agenda Item 5: Texas A&M Colonia Safe Water Project**

Dr. Taehyun Roh, Assistant Professor, School of Public Health, Texas A&M University, reviewed the PPT titled, "Safe Drinking Water in Texas Border Communities". Key points included:

- Arsenic is an invisible poison that can leach into groundwater and increases the risk of various diseases.
- Target strategies, such as identifying high risk groups and providing interventions and tools for early detection, are essential in areas with high arsenic exposure from drinking water.
- The current project in Rio Grande Valley colonias aims to empower the communities, strengthen partnerships, and lay the foundation for long-term improvement.

**Agenda Item 6: Addressing the health workforce pipeline**

Ms. Courtney Dezendorf, Director, and Ms. Emily Herrington, Texas Public Health Fellowship Program Manager, both from Office of Practice and Learning, DSHS, reviewed the PPT titled, "Public Health Workforce Pipeline". Highlights included:

- Hosting interns, fellows, and residents can provide early to mid-career level staff the opportunity to learn and hone management skills.
- 16 out of 99 fellows over past 3 years were placed in host sites in border region.
- Providing meaningful experiential learning opportunities for students and regularly connecting with academic partners can help fill current and future workforce needs.

**Agenda Item 7: Hidalgo County opioid initiatives**

Ms. Amy Gonzalez, Lead Epidemiologist, Hidalgo County Health & Human Services, reviewed the PPT titled "Opioid Awareness & Prevention Initiatives in Hidalgo County". Key points included:

- A community health assessment allowed the county to look at information needs related to opioids and the use of naloxone.
- Behavioral Health Solutions of South Texas is accepting applications to install Narcan vending machines in local health departments or community health centers.
- Partners at the South Texas High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program Task Force provide trainings on drug-trends, overdose identification and Narcan distribution and use.

**Agenda Item 8: 2026 meeting calendar**

Mr. Guillermo Zenizo Lindsey, Binational Communications Coordinator, Office of Border Public Health, DSHS, reviewed the PPT titled, "2025-2026 Meeting Calendar" showing the two remain meeting dates of 2025 and the scheduled meeting dates for 2026.

**Agenda Item 9: Public comment**

No public comment was received.

**Agenda Item 10: Closing remarks, thank you, and adjourn**

Dr. Rodriguez welcomed Dr. Taneja as the new TFBHO Chair and Ms. Harvill as the new TFBHO Vice-Chair starting September 1, 2025. Dr. Rodriguez adjourned the meeting at 3:07 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 August 13, 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 \(TFBHO\)](#)**