2024 State Health Report Community Responsiveness Summary – Working Draft

What is a community responsiveness summary? The Washington State Board of Health staff created this document. It highlights what we learned from talking to community members while creating the 2024 State Health Report. The summary also explains how we used community input in the final report.

What is the State Health Report? The Board must create the State Health Report for the Governor's Office every two years (it is required by Washington law). The report includes ideas for public health priorities and possible laws for the Governor to consider for the next legislative cycle.

Why did staff connect with the community for the report? The Board's mission is to support policies that make sure everyone in Washington stays healthy, safe, and able to thrive. To do this right, state agencies must listen and work with the people most affected by these policies. Disability justice and other community advocates often remind agencies: "Nothing about us, without us."

How did staff connect with community? To create the 2024 report, staff worked with Board members to decide what topics and issues to focus on. Board staff then set up two community panels to get input on the list of topics. Panelists from the west and east sides of Washington State talked about programs and strategies they are using to meet community needs in these areas. Staff also had one-on-one talks with community members to gather more ideas for the report.

What were the topics community was asked about? Board staff asked community members to share their knowledge, experience, and stories of how current public health policies impact their community and community health priorities. The Board had a special interest in hearing about:

- Maternal and Pregnant Person Health
- Health Justice and Culturally Appropriate Care
- Substance Use
- Data Equity
- Climate Change and Environmental Justice

What did the Board and staff learn, and how did we incorporate it into the final report? Some of the key things that Board staff learned from the community included:

(Option 1) – Word Clouds, with key points listed underneath.

Commented [MD1]: Note: This is a draft of the State Health Report's community responsiveness summary. Some of the information outlined is incomplete and doesn't reflect all community feedback. The purpose of this version is to outline options for how staff can convey what we learned from the community and how it was incorporated into the final report.

Commented [DM(2]: We will need to work with Comms and Community Engagement to discuss the best format for outlining this information. We don't want this summary to be longer than 2-3 pages. I've outlined 3 possible options below.

- **Substance Use Disorder in Pregnancy:**
  - Many pregnant people with substance use disorders lack advocacy and support during delivery. Babies are sometimes given treatments like methadone without the parents' knowledge or consent. More education about supportive care models, like the "eat, sleep, console" method, is needed.
- **Key Factors in Maternal Care:**
  - For pregnant people, three critical aspects are essential: easy access to care, high-quality care, and affordable care.
- **Importance of Birth Doulas:**
  - Doulas provide crucial physical and mental support during and after childbirth. They help empower families to advocate for their health needs.
- **Medicaid Reimbursement for Doulas and Community Health Workers (CHWs):**
  - Medicaid should cover services doulas and CHWs provide to support maternal health. This is in progress but needs to happen sooner.
- **Challenges in Postpartum Lactation Support:**
  - Many families struggle to find adequate lactation support after birth.
- **Essential Resources for Families:**
  - Families often need tangible resources like diapers, food, and housing. Addressing these basic needs is crucial to help them effectively.
- **Core Needs in Maternal Care:**
  - Three main areas are vital: lactation support, financial resources, and culturally competent care from doulas and other providers.
- **Non-Medical Support in Healthcare Settings:**
  - People benefit from having non-medical supporters, like doulas, in medical spaces to help them voice their needs and navigate care.
- **Lead Poisoning Screening for Infants:**
  - There's a need to ensure lead poisoning screening is part of regular check-ups for infants and young children.

- **Culturally Sensitive Healthcare:**
  - Healthcare providers must understand and respect different cultural beliefs and practices. This builds trust and leads to better health outcomes.

- **Holistic and Multi-Generational Care:**
  - Emphasizes the need for healthcare models that treat the whole person and support multiple generations within a family, recognizing the interconnectedness of mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health.
- **Building Trust Between Providers and Patients:**
  - Trust is fundamental for effective healthcare. Providers need to invest time and effort in building trust with their patients to improve health outcomes.
- **Role of Community Health Workers (CHWs) and Navigators:**
  - CHWs, clinical patient navigators, and cultural navigators play a crucial role in bridging the gap between communities and healthcare systems. Sustainable reimbursement and funding for these roles are necessary to support their work.
- **Culturally Relevant Care:**
  - Healthcare services must be adapted to fit the cultural and linguistic needs of diverse communities. This includes avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach and acknowledging the unique needs and barriers different communities face....

(Option 2) – Dot point lists, with "recommendations" under each bullet.

Access to Healthcare and Support Services

- Communities need better access to healthcare and related services. The high costs of care, and lack of care coverage is a major concern.
  - *Recommendation:* Included throughout recommendation 2 in the State Health Report.
- Issues of racism, historical and ongoing harm, and distrust in the healthcare system, especially among Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) are ongoing issues and remain major barriers to accessing care.
  - *Recommendation*:
- Pregnant and postpartum people need better access to care, especially those from communities that are marginalized. Pregnant people benefit from the advocacy of doulas – more people need to be able to access doulas. Doulas help fill a huge gap in providing breastfeeding support and culturally appropriate care.
  - *Recommendation:*
- People highlighted that Medicaid should pay for doulas and community health workers (CHWs) because the services they provide for communities are really important.
  - *Recommendation:*
- Many families have difficulty getting the help they need early on to support their children's development and other services.
  - *Recommendation:*

The Importance of Culturally Relevant Care

- Culturally relevant and appropriate care is essential to support diverse communities across Washington. Healthcare providers must understand and respect the different cultures and practices of the people they are helping.
- Providers must also find ways to have appointments in a patient's preferred language. Providers need training to provide this type of care, but more importantly, providers need to be from the community and/or share the same culture and language as their patients.

Economic and Systemic Barriers to Care

- Many families struggle to afford basic needs, like food and housing. This makes it hard for them to stay healthy and get out of a cycle of economic instability and poverty. When people can't meet their basic needs, it's hard for them to think about anything else. Also, if families don't have stable housing, it directly affects their health and ability to thrive.
- Medicaid doesn't cover all the services that people need.

Systemic Issues in Healthcare

- There is an urgent need for systemic changes in healthcare—such as longer appointment times so providers can give better and more personalized care, better connections from clinics to community-based services, and anti-racist training for providers and staff—to provide better patient care and culturally appropriate care.
- Our healthcare system must move towards whole-person, holistic care models that address physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. This care should also be multi-generational.

- Providers and systems of care need to support individual and community healing. If we can't acknowledge past harms and help communities heal, we can't move forward and authentically build back trust.
- Culturally appropriate care needs to be addressed in the workforce development realm, where BIPOC providers have equitable access to education, training, and ongoing support to become healthcare professionals.

Data and Equity

- To move towards data equity, the community should lead and direct data collection efforts, or agencies should support community involvement at every stage. In any data collection and analysis process, it is essential to ensure that people's voices are heard, and their needs are addressed.
- There are calls from the community for transparency and accountability in data use, especially in addressing inequities.
- People also asked, "How can we turn data into action?"

Support for People with Substance Use Disorders (SUDs)

- Community members highlighted:
  - There is a call for more support and services for pregnant individuals with substance use disorders, including better prenatal and postnatal care.
  - The importance of addressing the roots of substance use, such as early childhood trauma.
  - The need for a public health approach to SUD instead of a criminal-legal approach was also highlighted.

Community and Environmental Health

- The health of a community is closely connected to the natural and built environment. For example, homes should be checked for things like mold and lead that can make people sick and have long-term impacts on health.
- Pollution from Airports and Traffic: Communities near airports are exposed to more pollution from planes and cars. This pollution can cause health problems like asthma and heart disease.
- Heat and Housing: Many homes lack cooling systems, making extreme heat dangerous for families.
- Lead Poisoning and Safe Homes: Community groups need to provide lead testing for children and check homes for lead to prevent exposure.
- Green Spaces for Communities of Color: It's crucial for communities, especially BIPOC communities, to have access to safe, outdoor green areas.
- Environmental Racism and Infrastructure Projects: Environmental issues like pollution from highways, factories, and airports often affect communities of color the most. Big projects like new apartments or railways sometimes ignore these communities' needs and input.
- Consulting BIPOC Communities on Environmental Justice: Agencies should consult with and hire people from BIPOC communities who can represent and make decisions for their neighborhoods.

- Tribal Land and Green Projects: Green energy projects like wind turbines and solar panels are sometimes built on Tribal lands without consulting the Tribes, risking harm to their cultural sites and knowledge.
- Climate Change Impacts on Tribes: Tribes have long noticed how climate change affects their lands and ways of life, such as changes to their traditional foods and the seasons.
- Effects of Climate Change: Climate change is already forcing people to move and affecting their health in Washington.
- Improving Air Quality: Improving air quality with filters and better HVAC systems is critical, especially after COVID-19.

Option 3, Table Format: Summary of what we learned from community members and how it was incorporated into the final report.

Summary: What did we learn?	Recommendation: How was this or wasn't incorporated into the Final State Health Report?	Next Steps: What now? What do we plan to do with this information?
Theme/general comment (de-identified).	Ex) Is this in the report?	Ex) In addition to including this as a recommendation, we connected panelists with X..., which we sent these comments to, etc. Ex) We will continue to monitor this. Ex) This will be feedback to incorporated into either the PEAR Plan or the next Board Strategic Plan.