

Community
Advisory Council
presents the

2023 *Community Engagement Report*



willamette
health council



“I’d like to know a bit more about health insurance.”

Overview

The Willamette Health Council (WHC), founded in 2019, serves as the community governance body for the Marion County and Polk County Coordinated Care Organization (Marion-Polk CCO) operated by PacificSource Community Solutions. WHC convenes local Oregon Health Plan (OHP) members, health care providers, CCO representatives, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders to:

- Advance health system transformation;
- Improve the quality and availability of health care services;
- Invest in the social determinants of health;
- Eliminate health disparities and advance health equity; and
- Reduce the overall cost of health care.

In order to better serve the Marion-Polk community, WHC and its Community Advisory Council (CAC) identified three priorities for 2023:

- Foster greater CAC engagement in the Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) regional work;
- Host community engagement sessions to strengthen the CAC’s awareness of local needs and priorities - as well as educate the broader community about the CAC; and
- Refine the CAC’s approach to making recommendations on how WHC can best support community health improvement efforts to advance health, well-being and equity.

To further these goals, the WHC CAC co-designed and tested a series of community engagement events to better understand residents’ experiences with local healthcare and to directly hear people’s hopes, needs, and ideas for making improvements. Information gathered from these four engagement sessions – and more than 200 participants – informed WHC programs and associated community health improvement investments.

Background

The WHC CAC acts as the voice for OHP members in the Marion-Polk region. Members are selected for two-year terms and advise the Marion-Polk CCO on how to support OHP members and promote health and equity throughout the community. In 2023, the fourteen WHC CAC members included:

- Tammy Brister - Marion County Health and Human Services (Consumer Representative)
- Enrique Garcia - Legacy Health
- Bret Hammang - Project Able (Consumer Representative)
- Christina Korkow - Recovery Outreach Community Center (Consumer Representative)
- Kimberly Lane - Siletz Community Health Clinic
- Maria Lemus - Mano a Mano
- Jackie Leung - Micronesian Islander Community
- Melissa Lindley - Willamette Vital Health (Consumer Representative)
- Leslie Marshall - Capitol Dental (Consumer Representative)
- Breanna McLeod - Project Able (Consumer Representative)
- Victoria Meredith - Soaring Heights Recovery (Consumer Representative)
- Clay Peterson - Project Able (Consumer Representative)
- Kari Wilhite - Polk County Public Health
- Kiara Yoder - Marion and Polk Early Learning Hub

Recognizing the importance and need to more meaningfully engage OHP members and the broader communities of Marion County and Polk County, seven CAC members formed a subcommittee to design a community engagement strategy to test and, ultimately, spread across the entire region. Members included:

- Christina Korkow - Recovery Outreach Community Center
- Enrique Garcia - Legacy Health
- Maria Lemus - Mano a Mano
- Breanna McLeod - Project Able
- Jackie Leung - Micronesian Islander Community
- Clay Peterson - Project Able
- Kari Wilhite - Polk County Public Health



“Keep doing these...and we will learn so much more.”

“Awesome to have our voices heard. The community knows the opportunities and solutions.”

This Community Engagement Co-Design Team (“the Team”) prioritized holding its initial sessions outside of the Salem area and with the Latinx communities, given these voices are less often heard and not as well understood. The goals of the initial four sessions were to:

- Provide an overview of the system serving OHP members;
- Gather community input about how the current OHP system can better serve and support the community;
- Solicit ideas to help WHC prioritize its financial investments in community health improvement; and
- Recruit involvement in the CAC and other WHC efforts to improve the quality and availability of services and advance equity.



Methodology

In the summer of 2022, the CAC agreed to develop and test a strategy to meaningfully engage community members in Marion County and Polk County to help improve the healthcare system and well-being of people in the region. The CAC developed goals specific to community engagement:

- Engage more meaningfully in the community;
- Listen and learn about what’s working and where improvements are needed;
- Increase trust with OHP members and the broader community;
- Create new and deeper relationships; and
- Get CAC members more involved with the broader community.

Consequently, the Community Engagement Co-Design Team was formed to develop a meaningful community engagement strategy. Furthermore, the Team partnered with the Mid-Willamette Valley Health Equity Coalition to specifically focus on better understanding the healthcare and well-being needs, experiences, and hopes of the Latinx community in the region.

The Team used a “Run of Show” (RoS) methodology to co-develop a detailed plan that included each event’s activities, timeline, flow and logistics. The RoS outlined each essential action, who is responsible for it, its duration, and when it will occur. The RoS helped ensure the Team distributed leadership and shared power and accountability across CAC members and partners.

The Team conducted four Community Engagement sessions in 2023. Again, committed to hearing especially from people living in rural areas and the Latinx community, the sessions occurred at:

- Gates Fire Hall, Gates (Santiam Canyon)
- Colonia Amistad, Independence
- Polk County Fair, Rickreall
- Viva Salem, Salem

To ensure the sessions were meaningful and helpful, the Team used a rapid feedback assessment to capture participants’ perspectives on what went well and where there were opportunities to improve. At the end of each event, participants took five minutes to rank on a scale from one (1 - not at all) to five (5 - a great deal):

- Value of the session;
- Knowledge gained;
- Opportunities to share views and ask questions;
- Likelihood to encourage others to attend; and
- Any additional feedback.

After each event, the Team reviewed and reflected on both the quantitative and qualitative feedback received from the participants, and modified the RoS for the following event based on that feedback.



“These kinds of meetings are very constructive.”



What We Learned

More than 200 people participated in four community engagement sessions in the Spring and Summer of 2023. Sessions were in English and Spanish. During each interactive event, participants were asked to share their concerns and priorities for improving healthcare and the well-being of the region. Participants shared their hope and need to access affordable services that are culturally and linguistically proficient. More specifically, participants prioritized access to:

- People who understand OHP and how to navigate it
- Pharmacists / prescription drugs
- Mental health services
- Healthy food / farmers markets / community gardens
- Transportation

Community members expressed gratitude for being meaningfully engaged and found value in attending these sessions. Overall, on a scale from one (1 - not at all) to five (5 - a great deal), the average scores based on all assessment responses were:

- | | |
|--|-----|
| • Value of session | 4.4 |
| • Knowledge gained | 4.0 |
| • Opportunities to share views and ask questions | 4.6 |
| • Likelihood to encourage others to attend | 4.5 |

**“People felt heard.
I cannot echo
enough how well
this was done.”**



Moving Forward

WHC and its CAC are deeply committed to improving the health and well-being of the Marion-Polk region. Meaningful community engagement is essential to understanding the healthcare and well-being needs and priorities of local residents. The information gathered at the 2023 sessions will guide WHC's 2024 community health improvements investments and strategies. Already, we have turned community engagement into meaningful action! Our first 2023 session, held in Gates, led to the creation of the Canyon Community Health Collaborative. This group includes local residents and representatives from Santiam Hospital and Clinics, the Service Integration Team, county government, and community-based organizations who are co-designing and implementing plans to improve healthcare access and the well-being of residents in the Santiam Canyon.

The WHC CAC will continue to build off of the learnings from their 2023 community engagement efforts. This will include fostering greater CAC and community engagement in the next Marion-Polk Community Health Improvement cycle kicking off in January 2024 with the Community Health Assessment. The CAC will also continue to strengthen efforts to outreach to and engage the community in interactive and culturally and linguistically proficient ways to raise their awareness of local needs and priorities - as well as educate the broader community about the CAC. This engagement is vital to helping WHC and the CAC continue to improve services and strategies to advance health, well-being, and equity throughout the Marion-Polk region.

“I found it really interesting to know that we have the opportunity to have health insurance.”



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