

**Healthcare Partnership Memorandum of Understanding  
 2020 Year-End Report**

DECEMBER 2020 – The Olympic Peninsula Healthy Community Coalition’s largest asset is partner connections through the Coalition and our ability to work together to build strong relationships and share resources. This was a key factor during the COVID-19 pandemic when all of Clallam County was suddenly on lock down in our remote community filled with needs.

Five years of hard work building a powerful network of partnerships as the **Olympic Peninsula Healthy Community Coalition** in Clallam County came to fruition in 2020 with the advent of the Covid pandemic, during which we proved our resilience and rapid response time in changing course to meet our partner’s and community’s urgent needs. Adopting a broader health lens, to include emotional and behavioral health, aided us in quickly providing a multitude of resources to our ever-growing number of partners.

**Our primary goal is to encourage Policy, Systems & Environmental Changes (PSE)**



**Policy Changes**

[Formal or informal written statements designed to protect or promote a culture of health]

1. Recognizing the need for healthy, nourishing food to sustain food-insecure children during the weekends, **Sequim Food Bank** instituted a policy of providing healthier food options in their Weekend Backpack Program for youth aged Kindergarten through Senior High. **OPHCC** provided an assessment of the offerings, and the menus were revised to decrease sodium and preservatives, and increase fiber and nutrient density while remaining within the financial and food safety constraints.
2. **Olympic Medical Center** conducted an exploratory project offering vegan/vegetarian taste samplings in their cafeteria, and this successful pilot led to the adoption of a strategy to provide a vegan and/or

*Forming partnerships and networks that establish healthy choices as the standard in our community.*



vegetarian menu option each day for their cafeteria customers. Since (pre-COVID) many of the public also eat at this cafeteria when visiting the hospital, this step provides a leadership example to other food venues in the county to move toward more plant-based offerings in the effort to decrease chronic disease.

### System Changes

[To help facilitate change in health care or community systems to improve prevention and management of chronic disease and other risk factors]

1. **OPHCC** developed and coordinated the implementation of the “Hunger Vital Sign,” a two-question screening tool used by providers to assess food insecurity so as to intervene earlier in the course of care with providers, in addition to providing a robust resource list for providers and healthcare social workers to link folks to food.
2. Practically overnight, **OPHCC** pivoted to develop the 833 Clallam County Toll Free Helpline in March of 2020 in coordination with partners from **Peninsula College, Clallam County Emergency Operations Center, Clallam County Sheriff’s Office, Clallam County Commissioners, Security Services NW and Olympic Community of Health** (Spanish translation) to provide a one-stop information source for county citizens looking for COVID assistance across the spectrum. Current resources available include access to COVID-19 clinic resources, addiction services, children and family services, clothing needs, crisis services, DSHS, employment resources, food resources, health clinics, housing, legal services, mental health services, Tribal assistance programs, transportation and Veterans. The foundation and ultimate success of this project was primarily built on the extensive connections already created through OPHCC partnerships across the county.

### Environmental Changes

[Changing the economic, social, or physical surroundings or contexts in order to positively influence health outcomes]

1. In a rapid response effort by **multiple OPHCC partners**, 9,800 cloth masks were sewn and distributed across Clallam County during March and April of 2020 to help decrease the spread of Covid-19 and decrease hospitalizations. Simultaneously, over 180 cloth isolation gowns were sewn for our health care staff at the hospital, clinics and nursing homes to assist inventory while we waited for PPE manufacturing to ramp up. Not only was this expeditious project due to prior relationships established through the OPHCC over the last few years, but it incorporated many different partners from numerous sectors working together for a common goal—saving lives in our community.
2. With the end goal of increasing access to health care and decreasing health inequities, a simple questionnaire was developed by **OPHCC** for mobilization at meetings and partner community events across the county to identify those in need of health care services, accompanied with a referral list of available providers and agencies. This will go into full implementation upon our return to “in person” events.
3. The disabled population has a higher incidence of chronic disease, and are a group often missed by traditional methods of education such as classes and events. As a means of increasing their fruit and vegetable intake to help decrease their disease risks, **OPHCC** developed a fruit smoothie recipe card solely



using simple pictures rather than words to assist these folks in making their own healthy smoothies at home. **Clallam Mosaic** provided the smoothie cards to clients in take home bags.

### Community Health and Food Access Connections

- **OPHCC** contributed to the adoption of a new wellness theme for the **Quileute Valley School District (QVSD)** in Forks. The roll-out was paused due to Covid-19, but will include staff training, student projects, parent education at school events, and a partnership with **Forks Hospital**.
- **WSU** staff was a guest speaker on the local radio station KSQM and gave a 60-minute talk on social determinants of health and food insecurity, and highlighted local solutions and resources.
- Along with a UW Seagrant, **WSU** established a Sea to Institution Foundation in our community with purchases of more than 4,000 pounds of local fish from a tribal fish cooperative to be distributed at local food banks.
- **Peninsula Food Coalition** transitioned to a virtual meeting format and hosted meetings to maintain agency networking throughout 2020. One of the highlights was a result of our SNAP-Ed advocacy and continued capacity building in newly established western Clallam County farms. The very first connections between the Jefferson County Farm to Food Bank Program (WSDA, HAH, and local Funds) and the Queets and Hoh Tribal Food Pantries were made this year. These remote Tribal Food Pantries in west Jefferson County have not been able to be recipients of a program that purchases local produce from farmers to be distributed at food banks.
- **WSU/SNAP-Ed** partnerships included:
  - Building a network of volunteers and champions to host 11 new Little Free Food Pantries throughout the county
  - Providing Spanish nutrition information, seed and plant starts along with food resources to the Forks Human Rights Group
  - Successfully adapting the Native Harvest program – (a tribal gleaning program partnership) to continue to serve food insecure and vulnerable tribal community members during Covid-19 precautions
  - Establishing a new farm gleaning program which harvested more than 3,000 pounds of organic vegetables for meal programs and non-profits serving food insecure community members
  - Creating an exhaustive (bi-lingual) Covid-19 food resource list used in local government and non-profits in Clallam County

### Olympic Community of Health (OCH) and Medicaid Transformation Project (MTP)

- A collaborative project with **OPHCC**, **North Olympic Health Care Network (NOHN)**, and **First Step Family Support Center** designed to screen for health-related social needs with follow-up of robust resources/support received the “*Most Creative Partnership Award*” in 2020 from **OCH!**
- **OPHCC** successfully met all MTP Change Plan objectives.



- **OPHCC's** contract staff serves on the board of **OCH**. We represent the needs and perspective of Chronic Disease Prevention throughout our region.
- **OPHCC** completed a Social Determinants of Health Assessment which took the place of our scheduled site visit with the **OCH**.

### Community Outreach

- **OPHCC** initiated Wellness Committee Meeting for the **QVSD** in Forks. The wellness committee included a representative from each of the Forks schools, that included food services, director of finance, district nurse and physical education teachers. They are excited to bring 5210 programming to Forks!
- **OPHCC** attended a meeting with the QVSD Superintendent to discuss 5210 options. Forks would like to start with a "soft rollout" and work towards a full roll out when school starts so they can prepare ahead for the upcoming school year.
- **OPHCC** created a Giving Back Behavioral Health Project and hand-delivered to behavioral health providers at 16 community non-profit agencies – 342 individual jars, each containing 31 different inspirational quotes and a gift card purchased from local businesses from Sequim to Neah Bay. This was extremely well-received and greatly appreciated by the providers who have been carrying high caseloads.

*As the manager of Behavioral Health Services at **NOHN**, I had the great privilege today of receiving the incredibly thoughtful, endlessly warm gift of jars of appreciation from your team. It was an honor to get to distribute the jars to my staff and take a few moments with each of them to express the tremendous gratitude expressed in your gift. The potted plant to adorn our front desk area is a great reminder of the hard work of the behavioral health team and also brightens the space tremendously. Thank you so very much for the time, effort, and energy that went into these gifts. Thank you for thinking of us.*

### OPHCC Participated in 2020 Community Outreach Events

- **OPHCC** attended virtual Family Fun Day with Sequim Irrigation Festival and provided a video that featured local children making healthy smoothies with **Dr. Monica Dixon**. **OPHCC** also provided sugar math cards, 5210 stickers and printed recipe cards for take-home goodie bags. Design work and printing provided by **OMC**.
- **OPHCC** coordinated "When I feel stressed, I Can..." with **Peninsula Behavioral Health**. This project turned into a hand out for events, schools and **Boys & Girls Club**.
- **OPHCC** staffed a 5210 booth with sugar math and smoothie bike at Kids' Fest.
- **OPHCC** provided materials for **Clallam Mosaic's** Health Fair and weekly bags.



### New OPHCC Community Partnerships in 2020

- **OPHCC** gained dozens of new partnerships with organizations across Clallam County and established a valuable partnership with Senator Cantwell's office (Casey Duff).

### Additional Funding

- In addition to funding provided through the **Healthcare Partnership MOU**, **OPHCC** received some additional funding support from **Molina Healthcare, Amerigroup, Albert Haller Foundation and OCH.**

### Community Recognition

- **OPHCC** received a Most Creative Partnership Award from the **OCH**
- **Clallam County** recognized OPHCC for being nimble during a pandemic
- Local social media and newspapers featured **OPHCC** partner organizations work to create the face mask challenge
- **OPHCC's** Kindness Jars project was featured on the front page of the Peninsula Daily News on Christmas Day

### Summary

As the world quickly changed during 2020, we were all faced with challenges that required us to grow beyond our comfort zones. Never could we as an organization have realized the tremendous value our work building relationships with our partners and our strong networks would have once Covid hit our county. As such, we were able to mobilize quickly, pool critical resources across sectors and have a greatly enhanced impact beyond what one single organization could have done during these tough times.

**The support of this MOU helped us to fill critical community needs when we were most needed and has also helped us expand our work in 2021 to encompass our partners' and citizens' behavioral health needs.**