

From the Desk: Public Health Talk

with Anthony Maldonado, MPH

Hello all,

I want to say welcome back and into the New Year. If you celebrated any holidays, Happy Holidays. During the break I took time to reflect over the past year as well as remind myself to be thankful. As the new year has started I am hopeful, rested, and excited for what is to come. Lastly, thank you all for still following along with me on the journey of this newsletter. In this months newsletter I will provide an update on respiratory season, some general knowledge about the legislative season, and a new resource called Teen Health Hub by Washington State Department of Health.

We are seeing nationally and state wide the influenza rates are increasing. This is on trend for what we have been expecting. In addition to influenza, we are observing nationally that COVID-19 rates are trending steady but state wide we have seen an increase as well. These trends are appearing to be what was expected for the season.

Washington State 2024 Legislative Session has began. This session is a 60 day session (which is often referred to as a short legislative session) which will always be on even years (2024, 2026, etc.). Odd years are 105 day sessions (often referred to as a long legislative session). Here I am going to link to the [Washington State Legislative](#) website which has an overview of the legislative process. In addition to the website here is a short video (I am guessing many of you are familiar with) on how a bill becomes a law. Did that take you down memory lane?

During the legislative session, you can follow bills, listen in to the debates on the bill, sign pro (for) or opposed to a bill, or sign in and give testimony. If you are interested in following specific bills you can find the bill by typing in its code to the [bill information link](#). Senate bills typically appear as SB and four numbers that follow. SB is for "Senate Bill", typically starts with a 5 and has three additional numbers to follow (Ex: SB 5101). House bills follow the same pattern, HB but typically start with a 1 (Ex: HB 1201). If you know the 4 digit code you can find the bill and its activity using the link above in the bill information link.

That is just a little bit about the legislature. I want to acknowledge that I am by no means an expert and the little bit of information I shared above is barely touching the surface. I am talk more about the process if anyone is interested just reach out!

Lastly, wanted to share that DOH is hosting the [Teen Health Hub WA](#) on their website. The Teen Health Hub features a curated online directory of youth-friendly information and resources. If you have not already, please check it out.

If you are interested in continuing to receive this monthly newsletter please fill out [this google form](#); Additionally, feel free to provide any feedback you have or would like to [share here](#). I look forward to our talk next month.

Cheers,
Anthony Maldonado, MPH