PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes

May 23, 2024 | 10:00 a.m.

In Attendance, Welcome, Approval of Minutes

Present: Shawn Massingale, CeCe Lynn, Cady Lyon, Aimee Tenbrook, Madison Bright, Bob Dannenhoffer, Sarah McGregor, Kyle Riege, Nikole Fiahel, Cynthia Neronia, Michael Carter
Staff Present: Athena Wikstrom, Danielle Walker, Gillian Wesenberg, Susan Stiles, Ronda Osborn, Vanessa Pingleton, Colleen May-Weir.

Introductions and approval of May minutes. Kyle Riege made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Susan Stiles seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion Passed.

Health Update

Dr. Bob Dannenhoffer shared health in the community is currently good with a mild COVID, flu and RSV season. There have been expected spring diseases and upper respiratory infections. There is an outbreak of pertussis and whooping cough in Lane and Clackamas County, none in Douglas County. Avian flu is spreading from birds to cattle with a couple of cases spreading from cattle to people.
Douglas County has good immunization levels, but non-medical exclusions are increasing. The exclusions are now at 9%. School immunization rates are at about 90%, Oregon has remained measles-free, despite outbreaks in Washington and some eastern states. The concern lies in schools as immunization rates are in the 80% range, increasing the risk of measles spread. Half of the children infected with measles this year required hospitalization.
Post-COVID, children are catching colds more often due to missed early exposures during COVID. There are around 300 different cold viruses that typically circulate, and children usually have five to eight infections per year. Now that kids are back in schools and child care, children are catching minor infections that help boost the immune system.

Hub Update

Gillian Wesenberg shared Preschool Promise, Head Start and local school districts in Douglas County are the first in the region to advertise collectively for publicly funded preschool and kindergarten enrollment. Advertising is being done through various radio, newspaper and Facebook ads. This has sparked interest in Klamath and Lake Counties.

A current Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC) planning grant aims to prevent suspension and expulsion from public child care by July 2026. The goal is to keep young children in classrooms. Douglas, Klamath, and Lake Counties are exploring the use of behavioral health experts. The application deadline is June 21st, and the Hub is considering applying for the grant.

The Hub is advertising for applicants to fill the Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation (KPI) position in Douglas, Klamath, or Lake Counties, requiring knowledge of K12 and early learning cultures. The role involves collaboration with school principals, superintendents, teachers, and early childhood experts. All counties have applicants who have expressed interest in the Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation position.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) for Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation (KPI) is being drafted for the South-Central Early Learning Hub. The Hub received K12 early literacy grants from all 20 school districts in the region. Pacific Research and Evaluation (PRE) is reviewing the early literacy plans for best practices and alignment between early learning and K12. Additional funding is available this year, subject to an amendment being received from DELC.

The 16 Early Learning Hub Directors, the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC), the Early Learning Council (ELC), and BUILD Initiative are defining Hubs' roles based on past statutes and historical documents. The goal is to understand commonalities and differences as part of the Raise Up Oregon 2.0 initiative, and to define what a Hub is.

Feeding Umpqua Presentation

Sarah McGregor with Feeding Umpqua discussed hunger in the county. Feeding America's 'Map the Meal Gap' shows Douglas County ranked fifth in state-level food insecurity in 2022 with 15.4% of Douglas County population experiencing hunger, and over 23% of children experiencing food insecurity. Food insecurity is defined as inconsistent access to nutritious food. Last year, Feeding Umpqua distributed around two million

pounds of food monthly to about 18,000 people in Douglas County. Of the 18,000 individuals served, 24% were children. Feeding Umpqua is part of 21 regional food banks across Oregon and Southwest Washington, providing food and sharing resources. Donations from local grocers, food drives, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Oregon Food Bank support nutrition education programs. Feeding Umpqua collaborates with food pantries and operates its own distribution models. Food is directly distributed to housing sites and programs. There are currently 15 emergency food pantries, three shelters, two confidential shelters, three community kitchens, and the mobile pantry that visits five locations in Douglas County. Food Hero, an anti-hunger strategy, funded by a grant received in 2017, initiated a children's nutrition program. The program offers produce samples and $3.00 vouchers at local farmers markets, connecting local farmers and food systems. During the pandemic, about 100 weekly meal kits were distributed.

In 2023, over 1600 children were served, distributing almost $5000 in vouchers at Umpqua Valley and Canyonville farmers markets. Food Hero will be starting June 1st and continuing for 13 weeks at the Umpqua Valley Farmers Market, vouchers and samples will be provided along with activities. This aligns with the WIC Farm Direct Voucher distribution and the Umpqua Grown guide launch.

In Canyonville, a six-week summer food program runs alongside Riddle Summer School. The program includes activities at the weekly farmers market such as smoothie making, gardening, and art projects. Latin Heritage Month is celebrated with a "Do It Yourself" salsa bar. The aim is to encourage children to try new foods. Children up to 18 can receive $3 in vouchers to spend at the market until December and families can earn rewards through a passport system.

Free & Low-cost Summer Activities

Amiee Tenbrook, with UCAN Child Development Services, shared information from a list of free to low-cost summer activities. The list includes budget-friendly admissions, free park and camping days, festivals, community events, and fun activities at home. Museums in Oregon offer low-cost or free entry for people who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Women, Infants and Children (WIC), or veterans. Some examples include the Klamath County Museum and the Eugene Children's Museum.

The Kids Bowl Free summer program allows children to bowl two games a day for free, with discounted rates for family members. The Wildlife Safari in Douglas County offers free walk-through visits. The Oregon Zoo and Cascade Raptor Center offer discounts for people on SNAP, WIC, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Oregon Health Plan (OHP).

There are free Sasquatch festivals happening around the state. The Prehistoric Gardens and Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum are wheelchair and stroller accessible, offering affordable family rates. Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) and the Eugene Science Center offer reduced rates for SNAP recipients.

The Science Works Museum offers free admission to educators and discounted rates for SNAP recipients. A road trip down Highway138 in Douglas County offers beautiful views of waterfalls and natural spaces.

Oregon offers Free State Park days, free fishing weekends, and free National Park days. The High Desert Museum and Gilbert Children's Museum offer discounts for Head Start families.

Partner Updates

Shawn Massingale – United Community Action Network (UCAN) Head Start/Early Head Start - Head Start was able to secure a grant with the help of Gillian, Athena, and Heather. The grant will help offset budget cuts. Some areas like Roseburg, Winston, and Myrtle Creek may see reduced services. The grant may help restore classrooms lost due to budget cuts and possibly increase the number of classrooms, including an early Head Start classroom in Myrtle Creek or Canyonville.

Head Start is almost fully enrolled for next year.

Costco's Safety Fair, hosted by the YMCA is coming up in July. It is a great opportunity for families who spend a lot of time in the water. There may be life jackets available at no charge.

Colleen May-Weir – UCAN Healthy Families - WIC will distribute Farm Direct Vouchers at various farmers markets in June, including an event at Martha Young campus on June 7. Each family receiving Farm Direct can get up to five books containing seven $4 vouchers, valid through November. This is in addition to WIC fresh food vouchers. WIC is also giving up to 200 free diapers per month to eligible families, with more stock coming on May 29.

Family Connects Oregon selected UCAN for the 2025 cohort, offering new moms one to three free nurse home visits.
Healthy Families' new Program Manager for Douglas, Klamath, and Lake Counties is Brianna Paradise.

The UCAN food drive is on June 12th. There is a 5K event at Abacela Vineyard on the 29th, which had 200 participant spots available, there are only 24 spots still available.

Madison Bright – Family Relief Nursery – Family Relief Nursery is preparing for the carnival on June 1st in Cottage Grove. Classes are full in both toddler and preschool classes. However, due to summer travel and relocations, spots will open. Enrollment happens year-round.

CeCe Lynn- Evergreen Family Medicine- The Beautiful Beginnings prenatal series ends next month. The next series starts on July 23rd, and it is open to all Douglas County families, not just Evergreen patients. The Hope Clinic is continuing its prenatal classes with dinner. Evergreen Family Medicine plans to attend Mercy's Kids Safety Day 2024 in Sherm's parking lot on July 20th from 10am -1pm.

Danille Walker – Community UPLiFT – Community UPLiFT has had 33 total referrals across the region, with 15 in Douglas County, 17 in Klamath County, and one in Lake County since the start of the quarter in April 2024. Community UPLiFT can conduct presentations, either in person or virtually to interested organizations.

Susan Stiles – Take Root Parenting Connection - The bi-weekly parent support and Autistic Parents Connection groups are ongoing. Take Root and the Hub will join the Winchester Elementary Family Fun Fair. Take Root's summer schedule includes a family taco night where families will cook together, a three-week infant massage series starting August 8th, and a strength planning workshop facilitated by Les Rodgers on the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process and how to do a one-page profile for children.

Athena Wikstrom - Early Learning Hub – We're currently accepting applications for the 2023 - 2024 and 2024 - 2025 Preschool Promise years. This program is for Oregon children aged three and four from families earning up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

Gillian Wesenberg - Early Learning Hub – The Request for Application (RFA) for Preschool Promise came out this week, any providers hoping to receive Preschool Promise funding through DELC are encouraged to apply. Preschool Promise has 18 slots available for redistribution in the South-Central region. There is a waiting list that ensures when slots become available, those sites who qualify through the RFA process and are still interested in new Preschool Promise slots will be contacted promptly.

Next Meeting Date

June 27, 2024, from 10:00 am-12:00pm