

Executive Director Report November 16, 2021

Organizational Updates

- **State Liaison Committee**

- As discussed at the annual meeting, KALHD President Aften Gardner created a State Liaison Committee to be nimble and work with KDHE on collaborative efforts
 - Aften Gardner representing small LHDs
 - Jason Tiller representing medium LHDs
 - Charlie Hunt representing large LHDs

- **Letter to Secretary Norman**

- At the annual meeting the board voted to have me write a letter seeking more local engagement from KDHE
- I drafted the letter and presented it to the KALHD Executive Committee which approved the language. The letter was signed by Aften Gardner to clearly convey this was a board letter and not a letter from me as Executive Director. This letter was shared to the KALHD Board listserv.
- I sent the letter to Secretary Norman on October 21st. He responded that day saying he would meet with his leadership team regarding the concerns in the letter.
- A meeting was arranged on November 3rd between me, Aften, Deputy Secretary for Public Health Ashley Goss, and Local Public Health Program Director Cristi Cain. The following was decided:
 - The State Liaison Committee would be added to the Local COVID Support Team that meets thrice weekly to provide more LHD representation. This was a specific request in the letter. Those additions went into effect on November 5th.
 - Ashley discussed KDHE's upcoming plans for what is being called Steady State (more on this below) and most of the meeting was talking about this plan and the LHD involvement with it.
 - KDHE indicted general support for integrating LHDs more in decision-making (our letter discussed concepts like concurrence and grant allocations) but asked if we could focus on the COVID requests for now and look to moving forward on incorporating other changes after the Steady State process. Given the COVID involvement with KDHE was also KALHD's #1 area of concern Aften and I agreed with this approach.
- In a nutshell, I think the outcome from the letter and meeting was very positive. The board got its chief ask (more participation in the support team), and the Steady State project will be a huge shift in how we deal with COVID and so local involvement in formulating that is a big deal.

- **Steady State**

- This is the title for essentially moving from pandemic footing to endemic footing on how Kansas responds to COVID

- Based off discussions mentioned above, my impression is KDHE will plan to launch this effort in the next month or so
- KDHE and KALHD have agreed that a team of **six** LHD representatives will participate in Steady State discussions (2 small, 2 medium, and 2 large)
- It is anticipated that 2-3 multi-hour meetings will happen with the LHD team. My understanding of the currently planned approach:
 - KDHE will draft a Steady State proposal internally. Secretary Norman has indicated this won't be a "near-final" draft, just something to start with rather than a blank piece of paper. He wants maximum input from the LHD team to shape it. This is meeting #1.
 - KDHE will take that feedback and look to make adjustments to the Steady State plan. Another meeting would be scheduled with the LHD team to go over the changes. This is meeting #2.
 - KDHE would make any additional adjustments that might be needed from that meeting and then present the plan to *other* groups for feedback (e.g., the Kansas Hospital Association). *If* those groups have significant concerns that require adjustment, then the LHDs may be asked for another meeting to go over more changes. This is (potential) meeting #3.
- **Discussion:** Cristi Cain has suggested we have the team of six identified as the first meeting may happen very quickly once the draft is assembled. Aften will handle appointments so I'd like to know any individuals that may be interested in serving on the team. I can sort through who is small, medium, and large later but for now I'd like to know who attending today might be interested in participating on this group, knowing the potential time commitments.

Project Updates

- **Webinars on SB 40 and American Rescue Plan Funding**
 - Work is underway on the SB 40 presentation. I've already assembled a slide deck draft for it and sent it to the rest of the team working on this. The emergency manager representative seems good with my approach. So, we're really just down to clean-up on the slides and figuring out the presenter(s). I'm not sure yet if this will happen late November or early December.
- **Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP)**
 - Next KALHD/KDHE Advisory Team meeting is on November 30th. I believe we'll be talking the next year's workplans (BP4).
- **Delta Grant**
 - Next quarterly meeting is set for December 6th

Legislative Updates

- **Special Committee on Government Overreach and the Impact of COVID-19 Mandates**
 - Has been meeting during the off-session
 - First focused on the Federal mandates
 - Scheduled a hearing on 11/12/2021 to focus on reviewing a couple bill drafts related to COVID-19 vaccine mandates
 - [22rs2356](#): Establishes a waiver request for religious exemption to the COVID-19 vaccines
 - [22rs2357](#): Allows unemployment benefits for those who lose their job for not getting a required COVID-19 vaccine

- Committee has called for a special session (11/22/2021) to address 22rs2356 and 22rs2357. Would require 2/3 of the House and 2/3 of the Senate to happen. If it does happen KALHD will monitor as the chief concern would be amendments or other actions that might compromise LHDs in their pandemic response. Currently, both bills are not items KALHD supports or opposes per our 2022 policy statement.

Important Dates to Remember

- January 18, 2022: KALHD board meeting (virtual) [reminder: new board starts with this meeting]
- February 15, 2022: KALHD board meeting (virtual)
- March 15, 2022: KALHD board meeting (virtual)
- April 19, 2022: KALHD board meeting (virtual)
- May 17, 2022: KALHD board meeting (virtual)
- June 28-29, 2022: KALHD Mid-Year Meeting (in-person in Salina; board meeting on 6/29)
- July 19, 2022: KALHD board meeting (virtual)
- September 20, 2022: KALHD board meeting (virtual)
- October 17-19, 2022: KAC Annual Conference/KALHD Annual Meeting (in-person in Overland Park; board/annual meeting on 10/19)
- November 15, 2022: KALHD board meeting (virtual)

--Dennis Kriesel, KALHD Executive Director