



***WA Pandemic After Action Review  
Task Force Meeting #8  
September 22, 2022***



# Our Agenda for Today

- Welcome, Group Progress & Where We're Headed (Kevin H.)
- Agency Updates (Kerstyn)
- Focus Area Workgroup Updates
  - Intro (Kerstyn/Christina)
  - Brief Report-Outs (Workgroup Leaders)
- Equity Planning Meetings (Kevin B.)



## *Quick Break*

- Breakouts: Recommendations

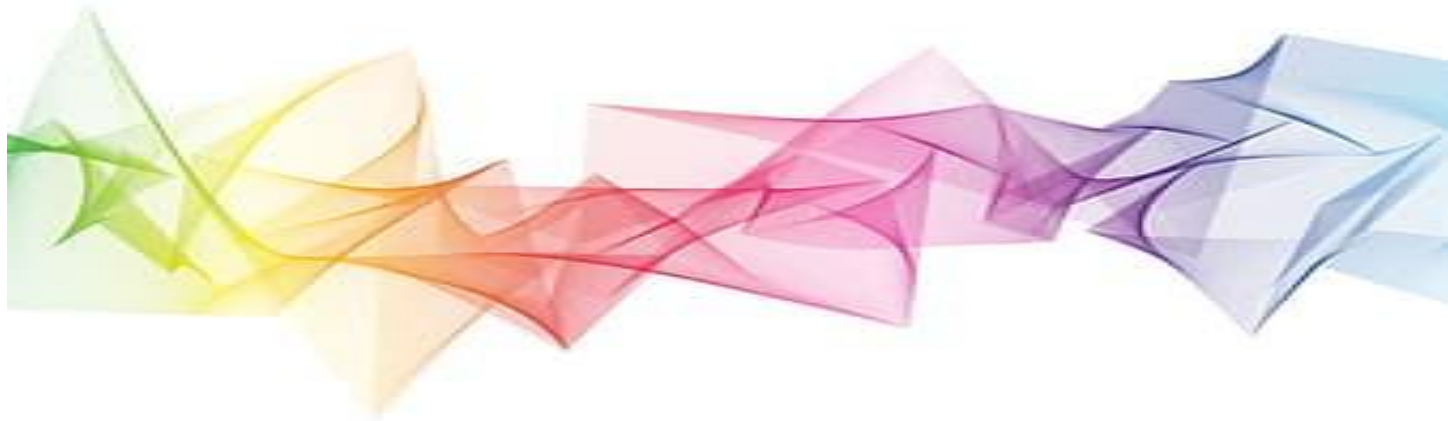
## *Quick Break*

- Full Group Debrief
- October Task Force Meeting Preview & Closing (Kevin H.)

# Where We're Headed.....

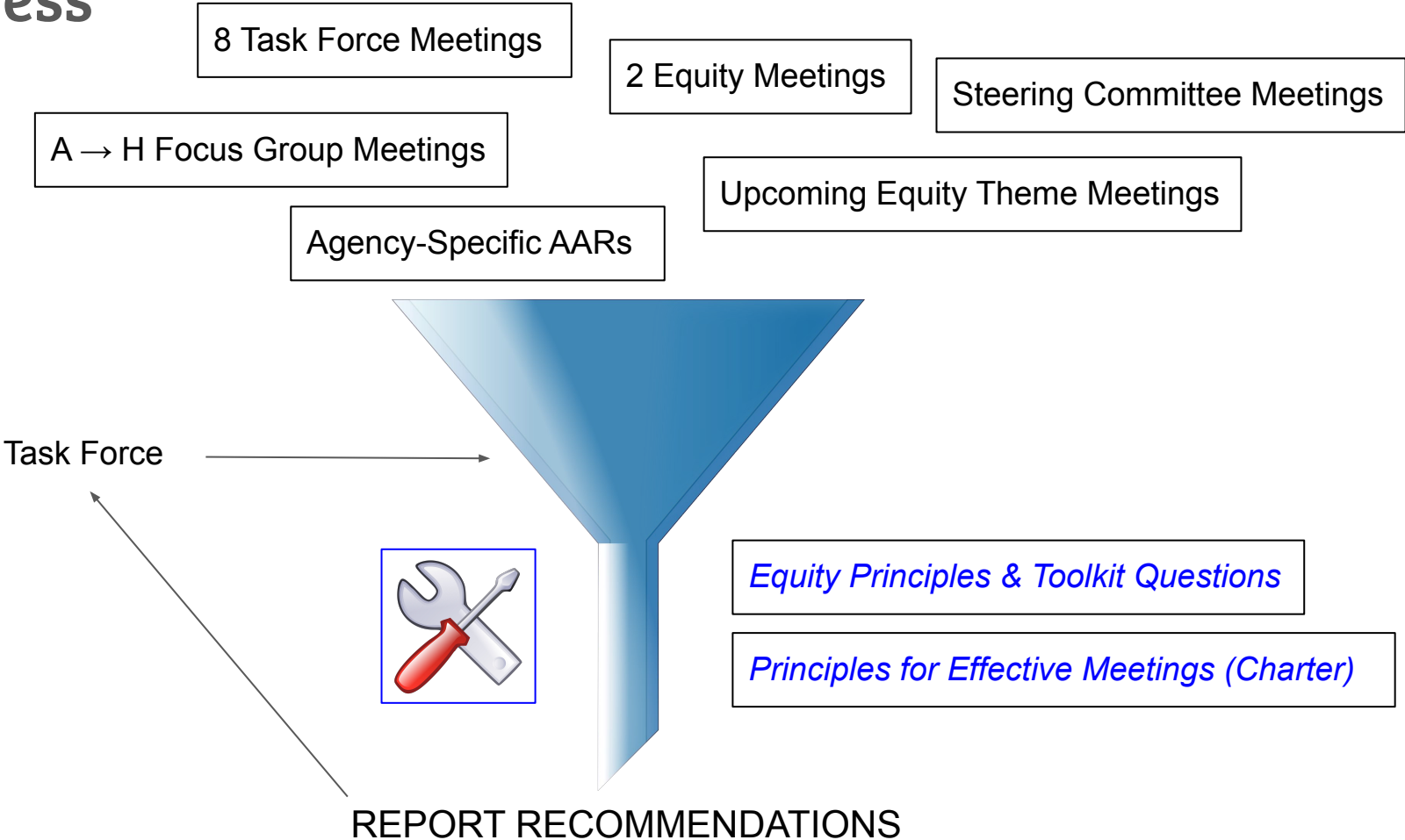


*Transitioning from:*



Listening/Learning  $\Rightarrow$  Synthesizing what we've heard  $\Rightarrow$  Recommendations

# Progress



# Agency AARs: Updates

- **Kerstyn Dolack:** Common trends include the transition to remote work and procedural changes. Other information is more agency-specific. The Focus Area Workgroups have been meeting. They will bring challenges and recommendations to the Task Force for further guidance.

# Focus Area Workgroup Progress: Updates

- **Tristan Allen:** The Department of Commerce leads provisos B (business) and C (rental assistance). On October 20th, we will have a meeting with a number of organizations to complete an AAR for proviso B. It's an open invite. Attendees include our agency, AWB, county associate development organizations, and other community organizations. It will be a 90-minute meeting. We'll start with a brief review of AAR findings to get people thinking. We'll take a write-up to the group for final comment. Rental assistance will be on October 27th. There was an AAR process looking at rental assistance. We'll use that as a foundation for discussion. We've invited the Eviction Resolution Pilot Program and other organizations. 90 minutes.
- **Alison Eisinger:** I'm interested in the opportunity to extend the invitation to folks who work in housing and human services. The legislative language references rental assistance. I've made the recommendation to address the eviction moratorium. Are you addressing the eviction moratorium as a tool to be factored in?
- **Tristan Allen:** We have discussion prompts that discuss the role of eviction. For business and workers, the Small Business Resilience Network: They would like to do their own AAR. If there's an additional way to look directly at the eviction moratorium, I would like to explore that.
- **Fernando Martinez:** I want to get more into this, whether its with Kerstyn or the group.
- **Kevin Harris:** The project team has assembled around proviso D. We have engaged the Center for Regional Disaster Resilience and leads from Burke Consulting. Over the next few months, they will be interviewing emergency managers and convening a group. We'll have a richer debrief in next month's meeting.
- **Melissa Lantz:** Proviso E: Gaps and needs to support volunteer professionals in performing pandemic emergency response functions. We're working with the Department of Agriculture, the Emergency Management Division, and many others. We have convened several meetings with our group. We put together a survey with 82 responses. All organizations sent the survey to partner organizations (tribes, local health jurisdictions, and many others). We will review the data and put together smaller focus groups. We will also conduct one-on-one interviews. We will work through the format of our AAR and present to the Task Force.

# Focus Area Workgroup Progress: Updates

- **Nathan Weed:** Proviso G: Gaps and needs in health care system capacity. Our group is being led by Amber and Rosalinda from the Department of Health. We're conducting interviews and holding focus groups. This will go into October. The review process for our internal and external survey is taking a bit longer. There are many comments that people are sharing. COVID was a disease outbreak on a scale we've never seen before. There won't be a delay in providing draft recommendations by November 11th.
- **Martin Mueller:** Proviso H: Guidelines for school closures during a pandemic. We have many parties involved in the K-12 system. We're deciding how to get the right voices together. Trying to think through efficient data collection methodology. We had a window of school closures. Not around the notion of closures, but around getting education to everyone who needs it. School just started. There are outbreaks popping up. There is lots of work going on around that. Taking an inventory of key actions and decisions from our agency. It's about what our role has been in K-12 education. Analysis of what worked and what we can improve on.
- **Angie Hinojos:** I'm hearing that a lot of reports were done within the agencies. We haven't seen those. I would like to request access to those reports. It will help us be prepared for the meetings in October.
- **Adam Wasserman:** Before putting together the Task Force, we asked state agencies for brief reports. We're going through to look for trends (communication, information flow). We should be able to post those to the website. A lot of information was agency-specific and doesn't benefit the larger group.
- **Angie Hinojos:** My concern: If there's nothing about equity mentioned, that's a gap. I understand that a lot of it will be internal, but some of it won't be internal.
- **Adam Wasserman:** We're picking out the trends that are less agency-specific.
- **Nathan Weed:** It's a wide variety, but we're putting together a visual that summarizes the AARs. The AARs are public documents. It would be doable to get some of those. It's an insane number of reports.

# Focus Area Workgroup Progress: Updates

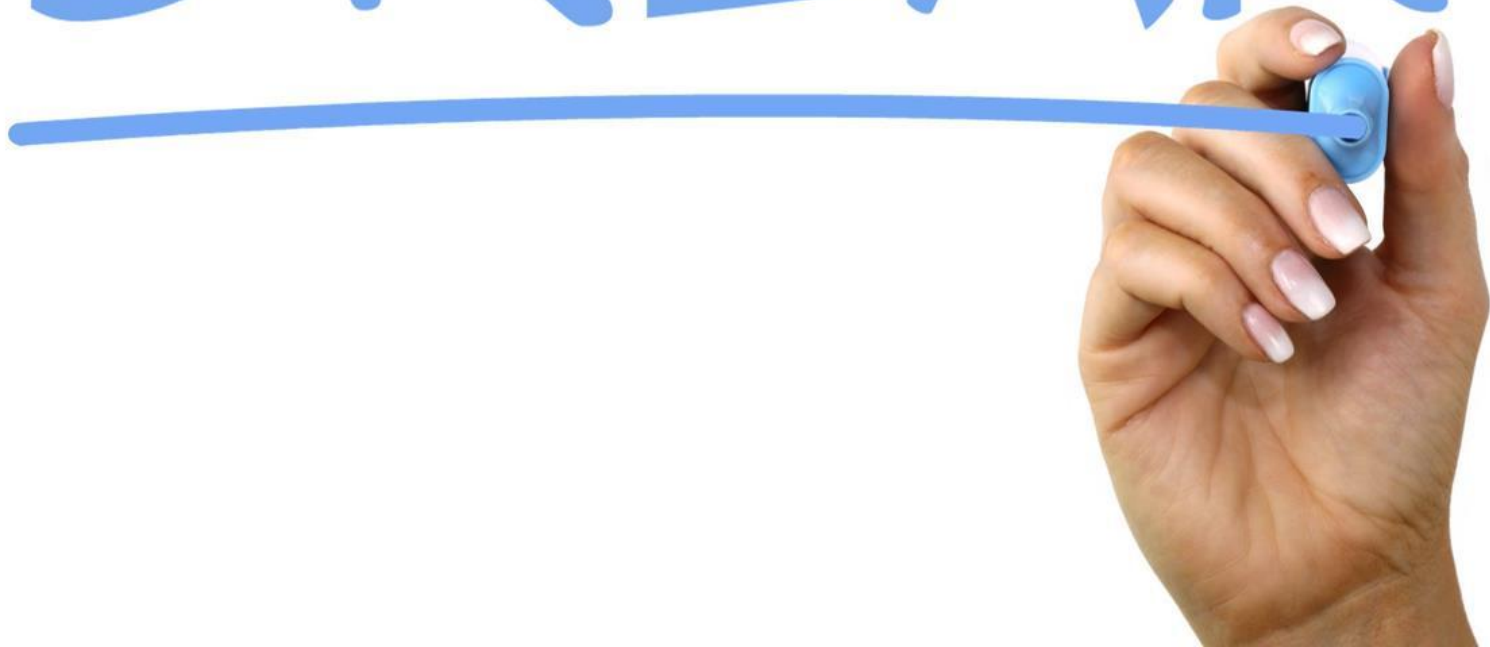
- **Fernando Martinez:** The summary wasn't significant. What are the causes of the issues? How are communities being disproportionately impacted? I want to get into the causes so that we can come up with recommendations. I'm wondering if we will make the time frame and the milestones. I appreciate the briefings.
- **Kevin Harris:** I'll address the time frame at the end of this meeting.
- **Tristan Allen:** Getting into the weeds. The intention is to move beyond what we're doing in this group.
- **Fernando Martinez:** Through process improvement, we'll solve problems that we didn't think we would solve.
- **Kevin Harris:** The purpose of the Focus Groups is to get into the weeds.
- **Adam Wasserman:** There are things that will pop up that we won't be able to handle within the time frame. These things will still need to be looked into, and we can bring them to the legislature and the governor's office.





# Equity Planning Meetings: Updates

BREAK



# Breakout Group Instructions

Discussion Questions - Document on your respective breakout group slides!

1. What key lessons have you learned?
2. What themes have emerged?
3. What gaps are you concerned about?
4. What are your recommendations to-date?

*Spend 55 minutes focusing on the above questions, in relation to your experience and the material you've reviewed from the AAR website.*

# Breakout Group **A** Notes

## What key lessons have you learned?

- State level decisions have local consequences. Acknowledge the hard work that state level and local level staff went through during a time of crisis.
- There was a general misunderstanding of what public health means. With federal relief going away, public health is returning to pre-pandemic levels of service which was inadequate prior to the pandemic.
- How do we maintain the capacity to expand public health when necessary? Recognize public health as a first response function.
- Enhance training and education.
- Staff wasn't prepared for the scrutiny or the politics.
- Don't tie funds to specific issues. Covid funds can't be used for monkey pox. Make the funding more flexible.
- Small organizations have difficulty getting funding due to multiple criteria they must comply with. Small organizations don't have the capacity to hire a grant writer or legal advice to apply for funds.
- It takes time to get approval from multiple layers of authority.
- The legislature needs cohesive recommendations that they can act on.
- Health departments are now going through audits of actions taken in response to the pandemic. Findings may impact their ability to obtain federal funding, when the focus was on getting services to the public as quickly as possible.
- What workforce are we talking about - there is an intersection of health care, public health, community work. Some vulnerable people were "shut out" from services that community workers had to pick up.

# Breakout Group **A** Notes

- We need to recognize community workers in human services, homeless services, housing services as part of crucial emergency response infrastructure. These workers must be considered as part of the first responder network, afforded the same investments before, during, and after emergencies. In terms of racial equity, the ability to have strong vaccination update and to disseminate public health information relied strongly on community workers, CBOs, and the usually uncompensated role they play in public health response. Investing in sustaining and strengthening these relationships is part of resilience and planning for future emergencies. Draft contracts could be in place to be refined and executed quickly in future instances.
- There might be better priorities for how we use resources like the national guard.

## **What gaps are you concerned about?**

- The special area focus groups don't seem to include enough robust community input that can be synthesized into recommendations, esp. In contrast to the capacity for AAR work internal to departments. This process (PAARTF) needs to find ways to support members to engage with their community networks better, or the recommendations will not reflect non-state-governmental experiences, wisdom, and ideas for recommendations to move us all forward.

## **What are your recommendations to-date?**

- Create a medical reserve corps/health care reserve or emergency volunteer network. [I think this note does not fully reflect the conversation: we were specifically NOT talking about medical health care but about broad community health work, and about the non-volunteer workforce that has been and will continue to be crucial. Please add whatever content you feel is necessary.]

# Breakout Group **B** Notes

Stacy, Jie, Brianne, Carina, Darcy, Fernando, Angie

## What key lessons have you learned?

- Smaller and minority-owned business are most impacted and closing. 25% of ethnic minority businesses closed due to COVID. Supply chains were consolidated and reduced and became an issue for smaller businesses. The bigger corporate firms grew larger.
- Supporting community org and small businesses looks different for different groups and meets the community where they are at.
- Without investments action will not follow - also related the scarcity mind-set in gov't and community org - and when you are connecting equity to the availability of resources
- Developmental Disabilities and aging - people with DD were 10x more likely to die. And less than 15% of DD lived in a facility/institution and were not getting access to care and services. Significant issues related to the workforce supporting this community and shortages. Also say elderly caregivers dying. People caring for DD are largely a minority workforce and overall DD caregivers did not have access to vaccinations.
- Hospitals and healthsystem - can't rely on fed and state gov't to support supplies and workforce. PPE was not fast enough. Services provided by feds were a mismatch on local need (i.e. Lumen field hospital). Need to look a local community to make decisions - need closer relationship betw hospitals and local PH.
- FQHC - racism is a larger threat to people's health and investments need to be equal or more as the investments in COVID response. People do not understand how to use the word equity. Some activities were burdensome and not necessary at some points such as case investigation.
- Capacity of team/staff versus what is being required in funding metrics and reporting
- Partnerships have been important –how to sustain them?
- Standardization versus community engagement and documentation

# Breakout Group **B** Notes

## What themes have emerged?

- Theme is that restructuring of org resulted in the demise of minority businesses and need to examine that and do more to help company gain access to capital and move more quickly.
- We need to understand the differences among different communities. Ex. within the Asian community the API community is more marginalized.
- People with developmental disabilities are an invisible population and there is limited understanding of their needs and how care is provided.
- Trust those who do the direct work to lead solutions
- Relationships between govt and cbos/nonprofs/orgs are critical—build them prior to crisis
- When systems and other services were compromised - the default was to have hospitals to support (i.e. LTCF not able to take people, they go to hospitals). Hospitals needed to establish their own supply chains.

## What gaps are you concerned about?

- Concerned about paperwork and reporting requirements and small businesses have to walk away from some of these opportunities because they don't have the infrastructure.
- Housing and caregivers/workforce for people with developmental disabilities. Also very limited access to therapies and services for DD and caregivers were providing therapies without support. Data - state had assumptions about where people with DD lived
- Most vulnerable communities were not prioritized or even accounted for. We were left out of decision-making and left out of access to critical resources.
- Equity in talk versus equity in action—we need to make the investment toward change
- Lots of various AAR reports—how to sync them and make them actionable?

# Breakout Group **B** Notes

## What are your recommendations to-date?

- We need to entrust the community to solve the problems and to do the work, write the checks and do the checks and balances. We have to trust organizations to do the work and do it the right way.
- Work with community org to design a metric system for reporting - with mutually agreed upon metrics on the front end is important. Accountability is crucial.
- Need to increase access to remote therapies and support for people with developmental disabilities and their caregivers. Improve the data systems in WA in order to better understand their needs.
- Hospitals - include task force members as a part of the focus groups. The state should work more with the federal gov't to make it easier for those on the ground.
- FQHC - need to invest and trust the community. Qualitative data is as important as quantitative data and hearing the stories/experiences - weight the qualitative higher.
- Maintain relationships that have been built
- Communities have to be present and part of the decision making; NOT just a voice but actually IN the decision-making
- Fund the actions that are driven from within communities
- Invest in actions around equitable response
- Recommendations coming from a lot of aar sources—how do we incorporate it all? State AAR? Local AAR?
- Synthesizing lots of info sources—how do we best utilize that info?
- Messaging has to be well-planned so that it forces continued improvement and response
- Make the messaging consistent to build trust—



# Breakout Group C Notes

Tristan, David, Melanie, Nariman, Martin, Samantha, Adam, Jane

## Key Lessons Learned

- NH need to have an assessment of resources on hand (how many beds, vents, etc) readily available. Defined relationship or ability to connect with state/other partners to share information.
- TA as a pass through funder we often pass through management to locals which was added burden. MB as a local that was an issue. We have a handle on what to do when an earthquake occurs, we had no prep for how to handle a 2 year pandemic. Preparation is different than a natural disaster. All this money coming in, good at pumping money into communities, but not all counties had the capacity and ability to get it out. Need some kind of how you operate at the local level in an event like this to provide services for citizens.
- DS everyone was in response for 2 years and other responsibilities lagged.
- SL WHA did great job of handling the changes. Ability to get info from partners but local smaller groups didn't have that, so worked to get info to local partners so there was similar information. Connect local groups as an ally. Continue coalition building.
- MM - OSPI a lot of prep for (swine/avian flu in past) but it was for 6 week, not a two year. Plans hadn't caught up with technology which made continuity of education easier once we got our feet under us. Decision making authority, OSPI doesn't have all of the authority a lot is local and so those relationships are critical. Where relationships were good and pre-existing handled better.

# Breakout Group C Notes

- DS Communication and information flow is always a challenge in an event. Struggled with the constant change/update of information
- TA Duration and information overflow; infrastructure not impacted like it would be in natural disaster. Tension between EM, elected officials, health.
- JH Not enough PPE initial issue. Labor was forgotten initially and agencies went around with communications at first. Need to have right people at the table. Had first case but not the worst outcome due to collaboration. Hospital, state and unions working together was a highlight. Set a template so that now we can do it quickly.
- DS Training is critical. Collaboration ability to make key decisions on the fly was important. Uncertainty in early days (PPE, Isolation, etc) created a sense of urgency, forced collaboration. Key lessons, we weren't ready for telework environment (zoom, etc) as a social services our focus is working with people face to face, quick adaptability needed. Equity challenges, such as develop disabled assessments; adjusted to online followed by very brief in person and had to navigate concerns of others. Now we have a plan to handle longer term situation. Communication piece. Flow of info down from CDC was a challenge.
- Interconnectedness and how our society functions. Asking people/agencies to do things that are not their normal function (schools becoming child care, etc)
- Secondary and tertiary effects of policy decisions

# Breakout Group C Notes

- Internal actions that agencies can take. As a state, we need recognition of importance of planning and having a plan; get people/agencies engaged. Recommendations, how we are going to address them and a timeline - commitment. Hope that the recommendations are uncomfortable and should press the edges. Commitment to resources. Sending recommendations to legislature sometimes won't lead to an action plan. We need an action plan.
- Highlight to core items and put together an Action Plan. Need a framework. Labor needs to be recognized. We need recommendations that doesn't lead to just another committee, but some actual actions and a corrective action plan. Improvement plan.
- Communication/coordination. Traction on recommendations, operationalization. Equity; counties have created a new vision that everything we adopt will be viewed through 3 lenses - Health, Climate and Equity. Equity was identified because of the pandemic. During an incident realized we didn't have plans for equity. Need to make sure during crisis, it doesn't take a back seat. Statewide recognition of metrics. Culture of preparedness in the state that transcends govt.

## Gaps

- Using the legislature as means of change is not an effective route; how can we make changes in lieu of that.
- Gap data sharing between organizations. Providing standard language and metrics around equity.

# Full Group Debrief

- **Kevin Harris:** What helped you make progress towards your recommendations? What held you up?
- **Darcy Jaffe:** If someone had been facilitating and taking notes, things would have been faster.
- **Nariman Heshmati:** How do we take concepts and translate them into actions?
- **Kevin Harris:** How would you categorize your recommendations?
- **Angie Hinojos:** We talked about who is being left out and who should have been prioritized. The “why” is really the question. Everything went back to the idea of the gaps.
- **Theresa Adkinson:** People are still processing their experiences. This was a traumatic event. As I hear people talk, I apply it to our response. Being able to share our experiences - The content experts could help with recommendations.
- **Kevin Harris:** You’ve been processing this for the past eight months. We’re still in the middle of this.
- **Alison Eisinger:** There are many challenges. I have raised this since the beginning: There is an imbalance between folks who work in state government and folks who hold other jobs in the community. This is tied to racial equity, gender equity, and class issues. NGOs partnering with government enabled us to do as well as we did. This will be crucial to us having recommendations moving forward. There is a tension between a creating a playbook and drawing upon relationships, infrastructure, and capacity.
- **Kevin Harris:** There is pressure on the Task Force in terms of legislative language. We’ve talked about the equity-focused gatherings. The Task Force is not the only group tasked with converting experiences into recommendations. The monthly meetings are not the end of the recommendations.

# Full Group Debrief

- **Kevin Baker:** It goes back to time. We're still experiencing the pandemic. Do we feel like eight months is enough time? Are 24 hours long enough to do what we want to accomplish? Those from the state are getting paid. Are community members being paid? If not, that's an inequity. That could be why we don't have all the voiced we need.
- **Angie Hinojos:** This conversation goes back to my earlier statement about the reports. There is no way to know what's going on with the agencies. If we're not seeing their work - We don't have time to discuss this every time we meet. I expect some themes will emerge from the reports. We could identify themes and gaps. There is information that some of us don't have. I understand why our conversations are crossing. We're talking, but some things have already been addressed. We don't have all the information. I like to "do my homework." I feel like I'm at a disadvantage. Right now, we're stumbling around. We're not in the minds of the agencies.
- **Kevin Harris:** Where are the state agencies at on their AARs?
- **Adam Wasserman:** There are some reports that we don't have yet. We asked them for lessons and obstacles. We didn't ask for a format. What went right? What went wrong? We have some reports that are one page and some reports that are longer. That's what we asked them for - The information. We'll get the reports to the group.
- **Kerstyn Dolack:** Nate mentioned a matrix to show themes and similarities between the agencies. We're trying to dive deeper. For the next Task Force meeting, we'll hopefully have more information.
- **Kevin Baker:** Angie, you're bringing up the point that things are time sensitive.
- **Angie Hinojos:** I come from a community that is often shut out. It's an issue of respect. I don't see a lot of Latinos at this table. If I don't say it, who will? It's about changing the structure of how we operate.

# Full Group Debrief

- **Fernando Martinez:** What is the impact that our state actions had on our communities? How do impacts vary between communities? Are the reports talking about measured impacts on communities? That's where we can get into decision making around next steps. Every community is different. Don't want agencies to just "check a box." How did our actions affect the state? How did our actions compare to other states?
- **Adam Wasserman:** This is a huge undertaking. We're being paid to be here. We also wear several hats. We can give everyone access to the reports so that they can help us. We all have different perspectives.
- **Kevin Harris:** Thinking ahead to next month's meeting - Changes that we need to make.
- **Tristan Allen:** Should synthesize state agency reports and get them to the group. Our conversations are oscillating between different questions without answering any of them (purpose, method, etc).
- **Kevin Harris:** We have spent time discussing the purpose. This is laid out in the charter. The "oscillating comment" is a legitimate comment. We're trying to funnel into recommendations. We know that this process is touching on centuries of hurt, feeling, and trauma. We're trying to be conscious of how the group is doing. What's going to evolve into productive, meaty recommendations? We don't want to go recycle this process.
- **Kevin Baker:** We continue to rehash things over and over. We don't take the time upfront to have the necessary conversations or build relationships. There are people here who hasn't said anything. I'm wondering what they have to say. Do people feel comfortable speaking their truth? If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together. We want to hear from the group.

# Full Group Debrief

- **Tristan Allen (Group C):** We talked about things from organizational perspectives. Theme: Generating a culture beyond state and local government around emergency planning and disaster preparedness. This disaster was unique, because communications didn't go down. How can we look at emergency planning and develop a plan that captures basic actions? That ensures equity is baked into the response? That's something EMD is tasked with. It has to be more than one agency. It's more of a theme than a gap.
- **Nariman Heshmati (Group C):** One of the things we have to work through: How do we build trust with groups who have been historically overlooked and left behind? How do we ensure they are not left behind again?
- **Melanie Bacon:** I want to show respect to people with different priorities. County governments had to deliver services to our citizens. I need templates for how to operate to ensure that we're reaching everybody. Difficulty in getting full dialogue: We're all coming from very different perspectives.
- **Fernando Martinez (Group B):** We looked at this from various perspectives (hospitals, businesses, Latino community, disability community). Communities of color and disability were most affected. The hospitals and businesses were the catch-all and were not supported. This comes from a lack of trust between government and community. Organizations that the state is partnering with can help us move forward. Should simplify state administrative processes. Had a conversation about the word 'prioritization.' This word has to remain in our vocabulary to get things done. One of the best recommendations: There is a fear of nothing being done with this work. Have to turn this work into something actionable. Don't want this work to gather dust. Example: Monkeypox.

# Full Group Debrief

- **Darcy Jaffe (Group B):** When the pandemic started, it felt like there was a tsunami. We didn't have the infrastructure in place to see beyond things right in front of us. Nothing felt like it was going right in the healthcare sector. How do we reach people at home? People in homeless shelters? I wish we had had the ability to do this faster. That would be my hope for this group.
- **Theresa Adkinson (Group A):** Could resonate with volunteer management and compensation. There were people eager to help, but how they were resourced and compensated became very complicated and overwhelming. Feels disjointed across the state. Tried to come up with some recommendations around volunteer management.
- **Faatima Lawrence (Group A):** There is a disconnect between community groups and government entities. Need a cohesive coordination system. Community groups knew what was needed. There was some back-and-forth until the government decided to listen to community groups. Differences between counties. Funding wasn't always directed towards the right places. Should pay attention to what community groups are saying. When the government doesn't listen, more distrust builds. That's an important theme we were hearing.
- **Alison Eisinger:** Recommendation around investing in the workforces that constitute our infrastructure during emergencies (healthcare, public health, community workers). I'm talking about the skilled, experienced workforce of community organizations on whom the emergency response relied. Investing in these organizations is critical (vaccines). Should develop recommendations around investing in these relationships and putting contracts to fund community organizations in place to implement things quickly in emergency situations.



# Thank You...

...for learning and sharing with us today.

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- Future Meetings: Fourth Thursday of each month
- Next Meeting: **October 27th** 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Link to AAR Website: <https://mil.wa.gov/pandemic-after-action-report-task-force>

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