

WASHINGTON STATE PANDEMIC TASK FORCE

FINAL COVID-19 AAR REVIEW

June 22, 2023



KEY LESSONS LEARNED

Key Lessons Learned:

- Addressing the disparities that were starkly evident among racial and cultural groups, economic and geographical areas across our society and highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic must be an integral piece of future emergency planning for response and recovery. This work must be applicable to all hazards for our state to prepare for, identify and respond to the needs of all communities in a more equitable and sensitive manner.
- Integrate response equity strategies that support all communities across all phases of emergency management planning.
- Invest in community collaboration opportunities that engage vulnerable and underserved communities to further expand the “Whole of Community” planning philosophy.



KEY LESSONS LEARNED (CONT)

Key Lessons Learned:

- Identify sustainable state funding to continue successful initiatives implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic that supported communities in need.
- Continue to build on the relationships created during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially between emergency management and public health.



ANALYSIS SECTION

- ❑ **Focus Area A**
 - **State Task Force Observations and Recommendations**
 - **Equity Gatherings Observations and Recommendations**
 - **State Agency AAR Review and Recommendations**

- ❑ **Focus Area B-H**

FUTURE ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Addressing workforce shortages

Challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic included workforce shortages across many different sectors, but especially in healthcare. There were regulatory barriers that adversely impacted the recruitment and retention of hospital staff. Researching practical and beneficial incentives for both employers and staff across the healthcare system and options and innovations for surge staffing could serve to build a more resilient system for the future.



FUTURE ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Making positive impacts by leveraging innovations

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, many industries pivoted from traditional ways of doing business in order to maintain some level of service and income. Stay at home public health measures meant to keep the general public as safe as possible resulted in challenges to access critical services such as basic healthcare and mental health wellness. Innovations such as the growth of telemedicine and apps that provide expanded connection to mental health support resources allowed many individuals to receive the vital support they needed. Additionally, some of these innovations created a safe space for those may have needed support but were reluctant to seek it out.



FUTURE ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Expanding community collaboratives

One of the key lessons learned in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic is the criticality of engaging with diverse, vulnerable, and underserved communities before an emergency to best understand these communities, what their needs may be, and how best to support those needs. The mantra “Nothing About Us, Without Us”, speaks to the importance of bringing communities to the planning space to understand the culture of a particular community, how they receive information and from who, considerations for communications platforms and formats, how to reach people where they are. Government and community organizations working together to identify roles, support, and resources and building on existing networks can build more resilient communities.

