



Kentucky Coalition for Healthy Children

Steering Committee Meeting Notes

May 31, 2022, 1:00 to 2:00 EST

Attendees:

Sheila Schuster	Advocacy Action Network	Jim Tackett Alesha Staley	Kentucky Department of Education
Jennifer Miller	Anthem Medicaid	Shannon Parker	Kentucky Family Thrive – KY DPH
Joe Bargione Beverly Winsch	Bounce Coalition	Erica Davis	Kentucky Department for Medicaid Services
Jessica Lawrence	Cairn Guidance Inc.	Elizabeth Anderson-Hoagland	Kentucky Department for Public Health
Kate McDonald	Feeding Kentucky	Penny Christian	Kentucky Parent Teacher Association – 16th District
Amalia Mendoza Chloe Atwater Allison Adams Ally Wells	Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky	Emily Beauregard Cara Stewart	Kentucky Voices for Health
Lori Vogel	Kentucky Association for School Social Work	Alicia Whatley	Kentucky Youth Advocates
Vestena Robbins	Kentucky Dept. Behavioral Health, Dev.& Intellectual Disabilities		

Meeting Objectives:

- The Steering Committee will hear presentations around childhood immunizations and summer feeding / breakfast in school programs and discuss support and coordination around both issues.
- The Steering Committee will discuss the best mechanism to determine the priority health issue/area to focus policy and campaign work for the year.

Pre-Meeting Materials Included in Packet to Review:

- ACEs Overview for the Kentucky Coalition for Healthy Children - PowerPoint
- Kentucky Coalition for Healthy Children 2022 Legislative Priorities – End of Session Update

Meeting Notes:

I. Member Updates

The following member updates were presented:

- ThriveKY & CHFS Monthly Advocacy Updates, State & Federal Policy. June 28, 2022, 2:00 p.m. EST. Link to [Register](#).
- Health for a Change: LGBTQ Literacy in Health Advocacy. June 14, 2022, 11:00 a.m. EST. Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky. Link to [Register](#).
- The Kentucky Coalition for Healthy Children's Newsletter was launched today! Please share with your networks.



The information on events as well as the PowerPoints from the meetings presentations will be sent out via email after the meeting.

II. Presentation on Immunizations

Emily Beauregard from Kentucky Voices for Health presented information on immunizations in Kentucky, including the following:

- Vaccination rates are down from 2019 by 65% in some vaccines like meningococcal, according to Kentucky Medicaid Claims, 2020.
- During the pandemic, many people stopped seeing their providers which has led to immunizations being delayed. Immunizations rates are down for all age groups.
- According to the 2020-2021 Kentucky Annual School Survey and its Healthy People 2020 Targets, only 29 counties met the HP2020 target measures for kindergarten. Only 10 counties met the targets for 11th grade.
- Kentucky is not meeting the herd immunity targets across the Board and is at risk of having outbreaks.
- Looking at Covid 19, immunizations rates are low for certain groups, and vaccine hesitancy is an issue which may occur with respect to other vaccines. There is an effort to question the science around immunizations.
- In terms of policies, the following were recently presented, with a high probability that those that didn't pass will be presented again:
 - SB8 (passed 2021) which creates a new exemption from mandatory immunization for any child, emancipated minor, or adult who submits a written sworn statement objecting based on conscientiously held beliefs.
 - HB28 (failed in Senate 2022) which prohibits public entity employers and postsecondary schools from requiring disclosure of immunization status, among other stipulations.
 - HB52 (no movement in 2022) which prohibits employers from discriminating against an individual who declines immunizations, requiring immunization as a condition of employment, or inquiring as to the employee's immunization status, among other stipulations.
 - HB57 (no movement in 2022) which prohibits a public postsecondary educational institution from requiring a student to receive certain vaccinations unless participating in a program that involves the delivery of health care services.
 - HB112 (no movement in 2022) would prohibit required "or coerced" Covid19 vaccines for children without consent of "all" parents/guardians (allowing if there's a disagreement among parents to let one trump the decision). Would also restrict the reduction of plan benefits for any child who "isn't" vaccinated.
 - SJR80 (failed in House 2022) which requires KY to officially recognize a positive Covid19 antibody test as equal to being vaccinated.
 - SB246 (no movement in 2022) which requires postsecondary institutions and long-term care facilities to offer immunization requirement exemptions, not just Covid19.
 - HB174 (failed in Senate 2022) which DMS to extend Medicaid postpartum care. A last-minute amendment was filed by Sen. Southworth to establish requirements for a public entity related to employee immunization status and to establish a private cause of action related to an employee whose religious beliefs have been violated related to documenting proof of immunization status.

Links and more information in PowerPoint sent out to the KCHC Steering Committee.



- The committee spoke to the situation of immunocompromised children who catch diseases from those who refuse to get vaccinated. This speaks to the importance of herd immunity and having immunizations in place to protect the most vulnerable and all children. Some cases have been taken to court by the ACLU. Legislators should be made aware of the need to protect the most vulnerable.
- Immunization compliance data in schools comparing those with a school nurse and those without show how those with a school nurse have higher compliance rates. Another cost/benefit argument for supporting a nurse in every school.

III. Summer Feeding and School Breakfast.

Kate McDonald, Child Free Hunger Campaign Manager for Feeding Kentucky, provided information on food insecurity and resources to advocate for summer feeding initiatives, as well as implementation of school breakfast legislation.

- Food insecurity refers to USDA's measure of lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods.
- Food insecure children are those children living in households experiencing food insecurity. In Kentucky, 1 in 3 children experience food insecurity.
- Feeding Kentucky is anticipating higher food insecurity now that some of the provisions put in place during the pandemic are ending, those that had resulted from the swift action of the federal government, USDA, and the Kentucky Department of Education, local schools, etc.
 - In March 2020 – the Summer Food Services Program (SFSP) Emergency Feeding and initial Child Nutrition Waivers.
 - USDA Waivers: over 100 waivers and waiver extensions have been issued since March 2020.
- Waivers were extended through June 30, 2022. Summer is already one of the hungriest times of the year. This is going to be a particularly hard time for children without the waivers, as many meal sites will be unable to open.
- According to Feeding Kentucky's calculations, children may miss out on 95 million meals this summer alone.
- **Steps that can be taken to protect children this summer:**
 - Protect summer meals in areas that will be serving meals to children:
 - Share information about summer meals sites with school districts and community organizations.
 - Help families understand how meals will be served this year.
 - Promote the summer meals texting hotline in communities where meals are available.
 - **Text FOOD or COMIDA to 304304 to locate a summer meal.**
- Work with community organizations in places that won't have summer meals this year to connect kids and families to other resources.
- Feeding Kentucky has an implementation toolkit on breakfast in schools to complement the legislation passed this year.



The PowerPoint on Summer Feeding and School Breakfast was sent to the KCHC Steering Committee.

IV. 2022 Priority Issue – Initial Conversation

With the session over, and as part of preparations for the next session, the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and Kentucky Voices for Health representatives proposed that the Steering Committee select a priority health issue to address over one year, from July 2022 – July 2023. This would entail developing a work plan, a social marketing campaign, and possibly an event.

The issue these KCHC member organizations proposed the coalition address is that of **child and youth mental health**. Given the alarming crisis in children's mental health, in part related to trauma made worse over the pandemic, and given the coalition's commitment to addressing trauma and resilience, all this could be woven into this priority health issue. This does not mean abandoning the policy advocacy work around the other issues identified in the KCHC "Policy Tree" already selected, it would just be giving this area special attention and actions.

Comments made to the proposal:

- The KCHC needs to propose pro-active strategies in child and youth mental health, to prevent negative and traumatic events from happening.
- Address discrimination, violence in schools, and issues that impact child and youth mental health.
- This is a real opportunity for implementation of the school trauma informed plans. Schools should have them written. How are they being implemented, monitored, what information can we gain from them?
- Some schools have written the plans and the initiative died with that. Are they following the steps? We need to make sure there is a follow up, implementation. What are the barriers, the needs?
- Issues such as gun violence, issues of disparities by race, discrimination, these all need to be considered when addressing this issue.

The group favored the priority health issue of child and youth mental health proposed. However, given that this is an important decision for all Steering Committee members to have a say and vote, Amalia Mendoza will send out a survey to all members.

Next Meeting: June 28, 2022, 1:00 to 2:00