

Public Health Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting

Meeting: Tuesday 23 January 2024, 9:30am to 4:30pm

Location/platform: Ministry of Health, 133 Molesworth Street, Wellington

Attendees

PHAC Members: Kevin Hague (Chair), Beverly Te Huia, Associate Professor Jason Gurney, Associate Professor Ruth Cunningham and Professor Peter Crampton

Secretariat: Jonathon Jones and Kima Costelloe

Guests: Jacqui Yip (PHA), Anna Jackson (PHA), Alani Vailahi (MOH), Ben Volz (MOH), Steve Barnes (MOH), Rawinia Thompson (MOH) and Dr Andrew Old (PHA)

Apologies: Maria Borshevsky (MOH) and Laura O'Sullivan (MOH)

Opening of meeting

1. Opening karakia by Beverly Te Huia.
2. Members asked to update declarations of interest. Ruth declared she had accepted a new role as a Public Health Physician in Population Health at Te Whatu Ora, starting on 19 February 2024 working at 0.6 FTE. The Chair noted it is a question of whether any conflicts of interest are manageable. The Secretariat will seek advice from Ministry of Health's Statutory Appointments and Integrity team on this matter.
3. Members agreed minutes from 5 December 2023 meeting were accurate and correct.

Actions:

- 5 December 2023 minutes and agenda to be published to PHAC website.
- Secretariat to seek advice on Ruth's position from the Ministry's Statutory Appointments and Integrity team.

Activities since last meeting

4. Chair noted the resignation of Sir Collin Tukuitonga from the PHAC in December 2023. Peter Crampton will be away on sabbatical leave for the first half of this year. Chair to raise membership with Minister of Health during their meeting later in the day. Chair would request that vacancies on the PHAC be filled as soon as possible.
5. Secretariat noted the New Zealand Food and Grocery Council had been in contact about the status of the PHAC's report on food environments. The Secretariat advised that the Chair would be meeting with the Minister of Health and that the report is in its final stages.
6. The Secretariat also met with the team working on Health-in-All Policies in Te Whatu Ora Canterbury last week in the context of the PHAC's work on determinants of health.
7. Synergia had reached out to wish the PHAC well on the finalisation of its food report and noted a seminar on 12 February 2024 on research methods for an evaluation on the Ka Ora, Ka Ako programme in Hawkes Bay.
8. Secretariat noted that Paul Hunt had emailed to notify the PHAC that his time as Chief Human Rights Commissioner had ended. He acknowledged his work with the PHAC and wished the PHAC well.
9. The Chair noted he had reached out to the Minister of Health about the food report, and the Minister has not indicated particular interest in specific areas he would like to be covered in the report, at this point in time.
10. The Chair noted the National Science Challenges are hosting a seminar in mid-February 2024, Kevin is co-chairing one of the sessions.
11. The Public Health Association New Zealand is holding a conference in Rotorua in April 2024. Dr Andrew Old is one of the speakers. The PHAC Chair expressed his interest in attending and presenting at the conference. Sir Collin Tukuitonga will also be speaking at the conference.

12. PHAC recalled the agreed priorities for its future work programme with previous Minister of Health, namely determinants of health. The Chair would discuss this with the Minister of Health at their meeting later in the day.

Actions:

- Chair to request the Minister of Health to fill the 2 vacancies on the PHAC as soon as possible.

PHAC Finalisation of its Food Environments Report – Part 1

13. Since the last meeting, the PHAC has worked to finalise content of its food environments report. However, it still requires 3 types of edits:
 - i. accuracy
 - ii. edit for continuity, noting multiple individuals have drafted sections of the report
 - iii. style, tone, and proofing.
14. PHAC noted it still had some work to finalise the report. They agreed that it would be best for one member to take a lead on finalising the report, acknowledging that most members did not have capacity to do so.
15. Jason Gurney offered to lead the final drafting of the report. It was agreed that one person writing the final draft of the report would ensure continuity and that fact checking could be provided through the Secretariat and supported by the Public Health Agency. There may be some areas where other experts need to be consulted for fact checking.
16. PHAC agreed that Jason Gurney would produce a final draft of the report over the next 3 weeks, and he would seek support with fact checking as needed.
17. It was agreed that Jason will send the report to PHAC members for review one week before the February meeting, where the PHAC will sign off on the content of the report.
18. After the February meeting, the report will be shared with the Strategy, Policy and Legislation team in the Ministry of Health to undertake a proofread of the report to ensure consistent tone and style.

19. The report would then be shared with external experts for review and high-level feedback, including Sir Ashley Bloomfield, Dr Christina McKerchar and Professor Cliona Ni Mhurchu. The PHAC will consider feedback from external reviewers ahead of the March meeting, where the report will be finalised.

Actions:

- Jason to finalise the draft of the food environments report by 13 February 2024 and share with the PHAC.

PHAC Finalisation of its Food Environments Report – Part 2

The Chair departed for his meeting with the Minister of Health from 11.30am to 12pm. Committee members continued their discussions on the content of the food report.

20. Remaining PHAC members worked through the current draft of the PHAC report, including the executive summary, which included a summary of recommendations. They discussed putting the section on the child lens earlier in the report.
21. Members discussed how the recommendations are to be framed and that they should be specific about who they are intended for. Members discussed the main areas and structure of recommendations.

Actions:

- Jason Gurney to incorporate edits discussed into the final food report document.

Debrief of the PHAC Chair's meeting with the Minister of Health

22. The Chair reported to members on his meeting with the Minister of Health, which was positive and encouraging.
23. The Chair updated the Minister on the PHAC's work on food environments and that it was in the final stages. The Minister expressed an interest in seeing a draft of the PHAC's report.
24. The Chair discussed the PHAC's work programme for 2024 with the Minister of Health, noting the topic agreed with the previous Minister of Health for the current year is determinants of health. The Minister expressed his support for the PHAC to continue with this topic.

25. The Minister indicated he would like to meet the Chair regularly on a monthly basis as his schedule allows.

Actions:

- Secretariat to prepare a letter on behalf of the PHAC Chair to the Minister of Health confirming the topics they discussed in their meeting, including confirmation the PHAC will continue to work on determinants of health as their major topic for 2024.
- PHAC to share a draft copy of their report to the Minister of Health.
- Secretariat to approach Minister of Health's Office to arrange regular meetings for the PHAC Chair with the Minister of Health.

PHAC input into the Government Policy Statement (GPS)

26. Steve Barnes and Rawinia Thompson from the Strategy team in Manatū Hauora updated the PHAC on the development of the Government Policy Statement (GPS) for Health.
27. The Chair acknowledged the PHAC's previous input into the Pae Ora Strategies and was aware that the GPS was the next phase of the process.
28. Steve Barnes noted the GPS is a statutory requirement, which outlines the Government's priorities for the next 3 years, and that it is linked to the New Zealand Health Plan. He outlined the shape of the current draft for the GPS and that the team had recently received feedback from the Minister of Health.
29. Once the GPS is finalised, work will begin to monitor progress on the GPS. It was noted that the GPS needs an outcomes framework included.
30. The group discussed how public health and prevention can be reflected in the GPS. The Chair acknowledged the challenges around prioritising public health with a 3-year focus. He suggested it could be useful to signal the future focus for the GPS, and that it could be a good vehicle to ensure that intersectoral collaboration occurs.
31. The PHAC noted that localities were an example of the health sector undertaking an intersectoral model at a local level, with some success. Models which have an integrated needs assessment were raised, for example Plunket nurses assessing housing and education needs alongside

health needs, and then connecting people to intersectoral networks to enable coordinated services.

32. Intersectoral collaboration was acknowledged as a good approach. The Chair noted that there is often good will at a local level in many sectors, but this needs to be supported and enabled at a national level. The Chair noted changes to the Public Sector Act, which help to enable intersectoral collaboration.
33. A member noted their work in mental health and noted that risk factors are broader than individual behaviours, and the physical environment has a major role. It was noted that there is often a focus on services, but there is an opportunity to think about what is meant by public health services in a broader way. The member pointed to opportunities to learn from COVID-19, taking a manaaki approach, with a local intersectoral approach.
34. Another member encouraged a focus on indigenous research or evidence, and pointed to recent Kaupapa Māori research which has produced good evidence around mātauranga Māori. Steve noted that quality also means cultural safety, and mātauranga Māori has a role in that.
35. The PHAC thanked the Strategy team and noted the PHAC is invested and wants to continue to provide input.

Actions:

- Secretariat to follow up with the Strategy team regarding PHAC's ongoing support for the GPS development.

Outlook for 2024

36. Dr Andrew Old, Deputy Director-General of the Public Health Agency met with PHAC to discuss the outlook for 2024 and the PHAC's work programme.
37. In the context of the PHAC's future work on determinants of health, Dr Old saw this as a valuable contribution. He suggested that the framing of cascading determinants may be useful and how behavioural risk factors could be influenced beyond health promotion.
38. A member raised resourcing and expanding the capacity of the PHAC secretariat. The member noted that the PHAC would benefit from a suitably skilled public health writer on board from the beginning of a project. In

response, Dr Old said he needs to think about how the PHAC might be resourced differently.

39. The group discussed the PHA's current policy work programme, including legislative reform. A member asked about whether there are opportunities at the interface between public health and mental health. Dr Old noted that Manatū Hauora had recently restructured its mental health functions with a new Clinical, Community and Mental Health directorate. Dr Old noted he had conversations with the Deputy Director-General of the new directorate to look for opportunities for collaboration.
40. Dr Old also noted there may be opportunities for a greater focus on mental health, given the Government has established a new Minister for Mental Health portfolio. The Chair agreed that there are likely to be opportunities to work across mental health and public health.

Next steps and actions

41. The PHAC reflected on next steps and actions.

Actions:

- Secretariat to liaise with the Ministry's Statutory Appointments team on process to appoint new PHAC members. The Chair commented that Sir Collin brought expertise in academia and connections with the Pacific community, which the committee could benefit from.
- The Committee were asked to consider the skills and qualities the PHAC could benefit from, or what might be missing currently, and to pass these on to the Chair.
- Chair to write a letter to the Minister of Health following their meeting.
- Chair may write to Dr Andrew Old regarding resourcing for the Secretariat.
- Chair to develop an outline of the determinants of health work and will link modifiable behaviours to a determinants approach. A potential area for exploration could be benchmarking young people and health with regards to social media and digital determinants.
- Chair to consider requesting attendance at the next Shared Public Health Leadership Group to update the PHAC's work programme.
- Jason Gurney will work on finalising the food environments report, and noted there may be some emails between members while recommendations are being finalised.

Next meeting

42. The next PHAC meeting will be held online on Tuesday 20 February 2024.
43. Closing karakia by Peter Crampton.