

# Public Health Advisory Committee

## Minutes of Meeting

**Meeting:** Tuesday 20 February 2024, 9:30am to 1:00pm

**Location/platform:** Online via Zoom

### Attendees

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

Secretariat: Jonathon Jones and Kima Costelloe

Guests: Alani Vailahi (MOH), Ben Volz (MOH) and Steve Barnes (MOH)

Apologies: Professor Peter Crampton and Isabel Foley

### Opening of meeting

1. Opening karakia by Beverly Te Huia.
2. Members asked to update declarations of interest. Ruth Cunningham advised that she had started her new role at Te Whatu Ora. Any conflicts would be managed.
3. Members agreed the minutes from the Public Health Advisory Committee's (PHAC) meeting on 23 January 2024 were accurate and correct.

### Actions:

- 23 January 2024 and agenda to be published to PHAC website.

### Activities since last meeting

4. Chair recalled that he has accepted an invitation to be a keynote speaker at the Public Health Association New Zealand conference in April.
5. He has been asked to speak in a session titled leadership views sharing the PHAC's views about priorities, aspirations, and the future state of public health in Aotearoa New Zealand.
6. The Chair noted he would raise the PHAC's position statement on Equity, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Māori Health published last year in his presentation.

7. Members suggested the chair share his experience on communicating public health messaging with government and the PHAC's independent role within the public health infrastructure.
8. The Chair also noted he would raise public health models that are effective. The PHAC's food environments report may also come up.
9. The Chair updated members on the process to appoint new PHAC members. He noted that the PHAC's input had been shared as part of the process.
10. The Secretariat noted the process would follow an open and transparent recruitment process for candidates and the appointments are a cabinet decision.
11. The Secretariat noted that The Workshop has been in touch and were ready to support the PHAC by reviewing the food environments paper when it is ready.
12. The Chair noted he had met with Ross Bell, Group Manager in the Public Health Agency responsible for the PHAC Secretariat to discuss staffing for the Secretariat to meet the demands of the PHAC's work programme in 2024.
13. It was noted that a Public Health Medicine Register in the Office of the Director of Public Health will be helping the PHAC with the determinants piece of work.
14. Ruth noted that it may be appropriate for a member of the PHAC to supervise the Public Health Registrar while they lead on the project.

**Actions:**

- Secretariat to prepare notes to support Chair's presentation at the Public Health Association New Zealand conference in April.

### **PHAC Finalisation of its Food Environments Report**

15. The Chair thanked Jason Gurney for his work finalising the food report. He noted Jason Gurney had brought the report together well and it felt more coherent.

16. Jason Gurney noted that finalising the report had taken a lot of work, more than he had anticipated. He strongly reinforced the need to have a public health writer with the PHAC through the whole project to draft its reports.
17. Jason Gurney noted that the recommendations section still required some attention.
18. Members worked on the recommendations section and consolidating the recommendations.
19. Ruth Cunningham offered to complete work on the recommendations section with a focus on consolidating the recommendations. She had discussed the report with her colleague Cristina Cleghorn from University of Otago, and she was prepared to help given her expertise in the field of nutrition.

**Actions:**

- Ruth Cunningham to finalise the recommendations section of the report focusing on consolidating the recommendations in the new few days with support from Beverly Te Huia and Cristina Cleghorn.
- The Manatū Hauora team to begin editing and proof-reading the front end of the report.
- The recommendations section to be sent to the Manatū Hauora team for editing and proof reading when completed by Ruth Cunningham by Thursday 22 February 2024.
- Chair to review editing and proof reading feedback.

**PHAC input into the Government Policy Statement (GPS)**

20. Steve Barnes, Group Manager Strategy team in Manatū Hauora provided a brief update on the process to develop the GPS for Health.
21. The Chair thanked Steve for the update and noted the PHAC looks forward to a more substantive discussion once the GPS is ready for a more formal review.

**Actions:**

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

**Determinants of Health**

22. The PHAC discussed the approach for their major topic of focus on determinants of health.

23. The Chair noted that the Public Health Medicine Registrar who would be leading this piece of work was unable to attend today.
24. The Chair discussed how he would like the beginning of the project to review the reports that the National Health Committee (NHC) and previous PHAC published, and to assess the current status of the determinants identified in those reports.
25. The Chair noted that a literature search may be needed to identify any other determinants that have emerged since those reports were published.
26. The review of previous reports and literature search would provide a benchmark and likely produce two types of recommendations – one for the PHAC on a monitoring approach for determinants, and one for the Minister around any determinants identified that have missing actions associated with them, that may need an intervention.
27. Members agreed it would be good for the first report to stay high level, then build on it with monitoring of information. The NHC report could act as a foundation.
28. If there were any measurables that the previous PHAC had identified in monitoring determinants of health, they could start working through and find a retrospective reporting of progress on those determinants and project forward as well.
29. The Chair noted that Treaty of Waitangi issues, dimensions of empowerment and disempowerment of iwi, hapu, whānau are brought into focus and picked up upon in its report.
30. A member pointed to big issues in public health – infectious diseases, globalisation, climate change and over-population but was cautious of not landing somewhere meaningful given the scale of these issues.
31. The PHAC may be able to provide value in the current public health system, to provide leadership on how to think about determinants of health.
32. The member noted this report could consider opportunities to act on determinants of health, and that recommendations should not be too general – it would be good to have some specific landing spaces. The PHAC needs to reflect on who this is for, and what the need is that the PHAC are meeting.

33. Another point to consider was that many determinants lay outside the health sector. What is the process or set of processes that enable action to be taken on determinants like that.
34. The PHAC discussed what determinants might be new, and the Chair pointed to social media and its impact on health.
35. The Chair noted he would consider raising with the Minister of Health extending the determinants of health work programme until March 2025, noting that he had not met with the Minister until January 2024 to begin discussing the PHAC's work programme.
36. Regarding the purpose of the report, the PHAC discussed identifying the most important determinants to focus on, which ones need more work, and what can be addressed.
37. Members discussed the process for working on this topic and taking lessons learnt from the food environments work, specifically the importance having one writer from the beginning. With this topic, it was noted that the PHAC members have a lot of knowledge and may not need to go out to external experts to seek views in the same way they did for the food report.

**Actions:**

- Secretariat to develop a timeframe for the determinants work, and to liaise with the Public Health Medicine Registrar to determine her availability to work on this project over the coming months.
- Secretariat to set up a meeting with Kevin, Ruth and Registrar to discuss the approach for the determinants of health work.

### Next steps and actions

38. The PHAC discussed its role in the health system and how it may best provide value, noting that the previous PHAC only provided advice to the Minister, and this PHAC has the remit to provide advice more broadly. The Director of Public Health had noted an interest to meet and work with the PHAC.

**Actions:**

- Secretariat to liaise with the Director of Public Health to invite him to the next PHAC meeting.

## Next meeting

39. The next PHAC meeting will be held in person on Tuesday 26 March 2024 in Wellington.

40. Closing karakia by Kevin Hague.

The meeting finished early at 1:00pm.

*Not all the time allocated in the agenda for the food report was needed due to the PHAC's decision to finalise the recommendations section after the meeting led by Ruth Cunningham.*