

02 FALL | THE CDO QUARTERLY

The CDO Quarterly provides insight into community-based partnerships associated with the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) Community-Driven Outreach (CDO) program. Each issue features inspiring and educational stories of effective community-rooted outreach work aimed at achieving health equity in Washington state. The CDO program centers communities who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and provides increased access to COVID-19 information, resources and vaccines.

Health information and services enhance outdoors program for kids

Vamos Outdoors Project connects young people with outdoor recreation, serving Latine, migrant, newcomer, and multilingual students and families across Whatcom and Skagit counties. As a participant in the CDO program, Vamos created a new point of connection between students and migrant health services, strengthening the framework of support both in and out of school.

Vamos provides free programming in biking, swimming, rock climbing, boating, kayaking, camping, and academic programs that support healthy youth development. In partnership with Centro Cultural Mexicano through the Community Driven Outreach program, Vamos added a social-emotional learning and mental health curriculum to all programs.

The Vamos team also partnered with the migrant-health nurse who works with local school districts under the state [Migrant Education Health Program](#). The nurse came to Vamos activities, gave vision checks and vaccines to students, and followed up with families. Students may see the nurse again

later this year; Bellingham Public Schools provide migrant-health services over the summer and have extended them into the school year.

“We work with a lot of school district partners,” said Marissa Avalos of the Vamos leadership team. “They have a lot of priorities they are working on with fewer resources than past years. Vamos supports our district partners and our participants’ families as best we can.”



The leadership team at Vamos Outdoors Project empowers young people to help create safe, healthy, and just communities.

Youth ambassador programs bridge the public health information divide

The Summer edition of the CDO Quarterly took a quick look at youth ambassador programs. In this issue, we dive deeper into tactics and operations to learn what's working.

Youth ambassador programs show how public-health outreach and education can thrive. Under the CDO Program, Health Commons Project funds multiple nonprofits that have developed youth ambassador programs to help build trust, circulate health information, and connect people to resources in Washington's Black, African American, and African Diaspora communities.

Youth ambassadors use a mix of traditional and digital outreach methods to ensure public health information is engaging, informative, and interesting for their peers and communities.

Outreach approach and tactics

Young people in the programs choose activities that reflect their authentic voices and environments.

Ambassadors hand out free COVID-19 test kits and PPE supplies at community events, [produce Tik Tok videos](#), record public service ads for local TV and radio, post on social media, visit local farmer's markets, and more. The wide variety of strategies allow the ambassadors to truly meet the community where they are.

Ambassadors not only build trust and health literacy among the population they serve; they also build social cohesion within the team, strengthening their own mental health and countering the isolation that students suffered during lockdown phases of the pandemic.

"Our communities wanted youth involved in outreach as an outlet for them," said Ruaa Elkhair of Health Commons Project. "It empowered students as they returned to a school setting after lockdowns and distance learning."

Outreach, however, is not limited to youth audiences. The young ambassadors begin conversations with all generations, attending community events mainly across King and Pierce counties, and Skagit and Snohomish counties in the past.

Operations

Non-profits including Mission Africa, Pacific Northwest Black Business Coalition (PNWBBC), and Gifts of Hope have shaped operations to set up the student workers for success. For example, the organizations provide stipends to each youth ambassador, organize team trainings, and convene peer-learning gatherings. Recognizing busy schedules among students with many extracurricular activities, partners tie stipend payments to participation in key meetings and events.

Program activities also vary in response to the academic calendar. Recruitment and participation can slump in the summer when school is out, but they pick back up in the fall and fluctuate seasonally. PNWBBC and Mission Africa now have, combined, 300-plus participating ambassadors.

Rhonda Tilford, executive director of PNWBBC sees long term opportunity in the program. *"This is our chance to cultivate a generation of young ambassadors, equipped with the knowledge and tools to protect their communities from future health threats,"* she said.



Youth ambassadors supported by the Pacific Northwest Black Business Coalition celebrate the Get Vaxx'd campaign.

Digital guidebook: A tool for meeting communities where they are

Comagine Health in the CDO program provides health-information resources and a peer-learning arena to help address the health concerns that matter most to the community. Working with the Martin Luther King Jr Family Center, Southwest Accountable Communities of Health (SWACH) and YMCA of Greater Seattle, Comagine Health convenes monthly meetings for 14 community health workers (CHWs) to provide training, trade insights, and share informational resources.

One key resource has been a digital guide for supporting CHWs in their daily work. Community health workers in Black and African American communities of Clark, King, and Spokane counties identified chronic illness as an important health issue. The topic became an inroad to address COVID-19's impact on people with diabetes, hypertension, and other chronic conditions.

Comagine Health produced a digital guidebook with vetted, reliable information on COVID-19's impact on diabetes, cardiovascular health, and arthritis, along with current COVID-19 vaccination guidance. Comagine Health regularly updates the guidebook and shares the content in monthly CHW trainings.

"The guidebook provides easy access to references the CHWs need," Comagine Health's Rana Amini said. "They do not need to do the ongoing research themselves and pull together the information. It's in the digital guidebook, and we add topics and updates, like COVID and flu vaccine and prevalence statuses."

25 years of connecting Pacific Islanders to health information – and each other

Over nearly 25 years, Sylvia Aho has been delivering news and connecting Pacific Islanders in the Puget Sound area to each other and their communities overseas.

Today, [Voice of South Pacific](#), the program she started in 1998, broadcasts every week on Facebook and YouTube. It serves as a health information hub and community gathering place, offering health advice from doctors and nutritionists, promoting community events and playing music from the Pacific Islands to thousands here in the US.

Voice of South Pacific is another CDO contractor that leapt into action when COVID hit, advising its listeners and viewers to stay home, wear masks, and get vaccinated. The organization interviewed doctors to educate its audience about the vaccines and organized vaccine events for their community. That work continues today, in part through the CDO program.

"We try to focus on our people," said Sylvia. "My hope is that Pacific Islanders can inherit information that is relevant, that the program is a connection to our people to keep them informed."



Sylvia Aho is the
Health Program
Exec. Producer

Featured Resources

Updated DOH Branding Guidance

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) recently updated a few aspects of their branding guidance for CDO partners. CDO partners can consult this [branding guidance document](#) for information about when to use the DOH logo and/or disclaimer language and when and how to get DOH approval. This document is organized by what kind of content CDO partners are producing, such as promotional outreach materials, promotional public health materials, existing DOH materials, and audio content.

DOH logos and branding guidance are always available in the [CDO Contractor Toolkit](#). For additional support branding materials produced under the CDO program, please reach out to a DH team member or email partnerinfo@wearedh.com.

New Vaccine Updates

Updated mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines

On September 11, 2023, the U.S. Food and Drug Association (FDA) [authorized use](#) of updated mRNA COVID-19 vaccines that provide better protection against current variants of COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend [everyone 6 months and older](#) receive an updated COVID-19 vaccine. Yale Medicine compiled a list of [frequently asked questions](#) for those learning about the updated COVID-19 vaccine.

Updated Novavax COVID-19 Vaccine

On October 3, 2023, the FDA [authorized use](#) of an updated Novavax COVID-19 vaccine that provides better protection against current variants of COVID-19. The FDA has authorized use of the updated Novavax vaccine in individuals previously vaccinated with any COVID-19 vaccine, individuals not previously vaccinated with any COVID-19 vaccine, and immunocompromised individuals.

Did you know?

This Fall, the DH team developed new “How-To” videos that can help you make the most of these CDO program platforms and technical assistance! You may already be familiar with the [Community Partner Page](#), [Community Partner Newsletter](#), and [Program Asset Library in Airtable](#).

Check out the 3-part video series that previews the basic features of each platform:

- [Part 1. Community Partner Page](#)
- [Part 2. Community Partner Newsletter](#)
- [Part 3. Program Asset Library in Airtable](#)

For further assistance navigating CDO program platforms and technical assistance, always feel free to reach out to a DH team member or email partnerinfo@wearedh.com.

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