



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

*PO Box 47990 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7990*

October 23, 2020

Bernadette Pajer  
Informed Choice Washington  
11410 NE 124<sup>th</sup> Street #331  
Kirkland, WA 98034

Sent via email

Dear Ms. Pajer:

The Washington State Board of Health (Board) reviewed your request to convene an emergency technical advisory committee, received on August 12, 2020, at the Board meeting on October 13, 2020. The Board declined to convene the technical advisory committee.

The request was to adopt a rule to convene an emergency committee regarding COVID-19 treatment protocols. In it you stated that a forum was needed for practitioners to share their existing effective treatment protocols to improve outcomes now, rather than waiting for a safe and effective vaccine.

Board staff and legal counsel reviewed your request to convene an emergency committee and determined that it did not require rulemaking or, therefore, a petition for rulemaking. Staff notified you of this, and let you know that your request to form a technical advisory committee would be presented to the Board at its October meeting. The Board has authority under RCW 43.20.050 to create certain committees to make recommendations to the Secretary of Health on public health policy issues pertaining to the Department and the state.

Board members reviewed your request, your follow-up communication with the Board and Secretary of Health, as well as public comment received related to your request. The Board members considered your request and declined to convene the COVID-19 technical advisory committee for the following reasons:

- The formation of a technical advisory committee for the purpose of sharing COVID-19 treatment protocols to improve health outcomes falls outside of the Board's purview and expertise in public health policy. The Board's mission is to develop and promote policies that improve and protect the public's health. Clinical treatment and standards of practice are set by the legislature and enforced by the health professions' disciplining authorities, and therefore outside of the Board's scope of work.

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- Even if the request fell within the Board's purview, the Board does not have the required resources to convene such a committee. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a large impact on the public health system, and many agencies have had to shift resources away from existing, pressing work to assist COVID-19 response efforts. The pandemic has delayed the Board's regular work, including the adoption of public health rules as well as the formation of other technical advisory committees related to its statutorily mandated public health policy work.
- There are existing committees and national forums that are focusing on reviewing and analyzing emerging or promising COVID-19 treatments. For example, the National Institutes of Health's COVID-19 Treatment Guidelines Panel, which is made up of representatives from federal agencies, health care and academic organizations, and professional societies, actively reviews scientific evidence to make COVID-19 treatment recommendations.

Thank you for your inquiry and interest. You may wish to contact organizations that are directly addressing COVID-19 treatments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Grellner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Keith Grellner  
Chair

cc: John Wiesman, Secretary, Department of Health  
Kathy Lofy, State Health Officer, Department of Health  
Board Members