

PUBLIC HOSPITAL DISTRICT NO. 2 OF SNOHOMISH COUNTY, WASHINGTON  
**VERDANT HEALTH COMMISSION**

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**Special Meeting – Community Forum**

**Hybrid: In-Person at Verdant Community Wellness Center and via Zoom**

**October 14, 2022**

**10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.**

**Commissioners  
Present**

Jim Distelhorst, MD, President  
Deana Knutsen, Commissioner  
Karianna Wilson, Commissioner

**Staff**

Dr. Lisa Edwards, Superintendent  
Leslie Silverman, Interim Director of Community Impact &  
Grantmaking  
Maggie Konstanski, Grants Manager  
Riene Simpson, CPA, Director of Finance  
Nancy Budd, Community Social Worker  
Kirk Mathis, Digital Marketing & Communications Manager  
Kaysi Kelly, Executive Assistant/Office Manager  
Monika Star, Wellness Center Assistant

**Guests**

Kim Gorney	Amber Torres
Mike Rosen	Chantelle
Maddie Small	Buckingham
Janice Blackmore	Sally Guzman
Shannon Sessions	Bertha Carbajal
Angela Jarrido	Casey Davis
Khulan	Maria Garcia
Jan Culp	Deb Brandi
Roger Pence	Emma Coleman
Esther	Melanie Tablit
Sandra Mears	Molly Rhodes
Carl Zapora	Gabriella Reeve
Samantha Birch	

**Call to Order**

The special meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Public Hospital District No. 2, Snohomish County, was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by President Distelhorst.

**Review Agenda**

Dr. Lisa Edwards began by reviewing the agenda for today's special meeting, the first of three Community Forum events (E:100:22).

**Presentation of  
2022 Community  
Health Needs  
Assessment**

Ms. Konstanski provided a summary of findings from Verdant's Community Health Needs Assessment which surveyed community needs in May 2022 (E:101:22).

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**Summary of  
Verdant Strategic  
Plan**

Dr. Edwards shared the characteristics of a Public Hospital District and an independent foundation (E:102:220). She walked attendees through the recent strategic planning process completed by Commissioners and presented the four new strategic priorities for 2023-2024.

**Key Changes to  
Grantmaking  
Guidelines &  
Funding Cycles**

Ms. Silverman outlined key changes to the grant application and funding cycles starting with the next application cycle opening on 11/1/22.

**Public Comments**

Dr. Sally Guzman: Edmonds School District. She is aware Verdant did some Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work this summer and is curious how the DEI findings align with the new strategic priorities. She is concerned about the application cycle of twice per year. She asked Commissioners how this is equitable as there are clear disparities in who is or is not getting served.

- President Distelhorst pointed attendees to the [www.verdanthealth.org](http://www.verdanthealth.org) website to read the equity statement on page 2 of Verdant's strategic plan.

Roger Pence: Retired resident of Edmonds. He believes the housing crisis is at the root of living healthy or not. He is disappointed to see Housing is not included as a Verdant priority.

- President Distelhorst clarified that each of Verdant's new priorities includes wrap-around services which would include housing resources co-located with food bank distribution, for example.

Councilmember Shannon Sessions: She is the Executive Director of Support 7 which serves the exact boundaries of the Public Hospital District for the past 40 years. Support 7 provides a 24/7 emergency response team, alongside Police and Fire. Their volunteers respond to surprise death incidents such as suicide, homicide, accidents to support families in crisis and help first responders get out to their next call.

Margaret Elwood: I understand that Verdant has in the past provided significant financial support for the bicycle education program in PE classes in the Edmonds School District. This program, called "Let's Go", now teaches bike riding skills and pedestrian and bike safety in all PE classes starting in Grade 3 through middle school. The school district relies on your funding to continue this program that benefits the health and safety of our children, as well as preparing them for a future that is less reliant on private automobiles for transit in order to protect the climate. Where does this fit in Verdant's priorities for 2023, if at all?

- Dr. Edwards responded that Verdant will be reaching out to current partners who do not fit within the new priorities. She reminded attendees about the upcoming Community

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Networking Lunch hosted by Verdant on November 4<sup>th</sup> which will be a way for local health-focused non-profits to meet with each other and also meet other funders.

Anonymous: Do you have data on the ages of those who participated in the community needs assessment? I'd love to see more demographic data of those who engaged on the survey and follow up.

- Ms. Konstanski answered, yes, this demographic data is included in the full survey report which is posted on the home page of Verdant's website. [www.verdanthhealth.org](http://www.verdanthhealth.org)

Anonymous: Why is the August grant cycle for organizations in the middle of multi-year commitments open for renewal applications if the commission knew the process was changing completely? It seems like a lot of time could have been saved for those organizations if these changes were communicated before they were asked to do the application.

- President Distelhorst responded that part of this big transition included finding the best time to start and how quickly this change needed to happen so the Board decided to begin as soon as possible. Dr. Edwards added that, legally, we have to complete the contracts that are in place since we have agreed to pay those organizations and are honoring those contracts.

Anonymous: As a parent with kids in local elementary schools, I've been sad to see programs like Healthy Habits go away--especially after the remote learning years and the trauma all kids have experienced over the past few years. Is there any plan to do programs that address kids' mental health that is not focused solely on counseling?

- Dr. Edwards answered that we are open to out of the box thinking and supporting programs that promote mental well-being for children which are not strictly counseling based.

Gabriella Reeve: She is a Family Resource Advocate with Edmonds School District and the possibility of losing her job every year is scary. Her job is very important.

Khulan: Does Verdant have programs to support the health of Asians specifically? It is hard to get health insurance. Eastern medicine is different and preventative care for them means things like acupuncture and using herbs. This is hard for urgent care to understand. Where can she find resources?

- Dr. Edwards answered that we have funded organizations such as Korean Women Services, Korean Community Service Center, and Refugee and Immigrant Services Northwest which provides support to individuals coming here with nothing from other countries.

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Anonymous: These changes seem to create a much bigger lift for small organizations. Do you fear less diversity in the type of organizations that apply and receive funding?

- Dr. Edwards answered that Verdant has been able to increase the diversity of its grant applicant pool and newer diverse grant applicants by 79% within the last 3 years.

Anonymous: There were four application periods identified for 2022. Is the Oct 17-Oct 28, 2022 application period still going to be available to apply for funding that would start effective Jan 1, 2023?

- Dr. Edwards answered that the next funding application window will now open on 11/1 or 11/4 (depending on when the new system will be live) and these awards will have a Spring 2023 start date. If your organization has a contract with Verdant that ends on 12/31/22 and you will want to apply for the 4/1/23 funding start date, Verdant will provide 3-months of continuation funding to fill that gap so you can get to that new 2023 funding period. In this case, you would apply at this November 2022 application period.

Anonymous: What is the plan for transitioning from grants that are currently on a school calendar, Sept-Aug, or on a calendar year basis to the new funding schedule? Will there be short term funding or extended agreements to fit the new grant periods?

- Dr. Edwards answered that these organizations would receive transitional funding to sync up with the new funding cycles.

Anonymous: Is the grant application changing? Such as the questions and style of budget reports or is it remaining the same as the last cycles?

- Dr. Edwards referred back to Ms. Silverman's explanation from the slideshow. Going forward, partners will be asked to select a primary and secondary priority area, provide a statement of financial need for their program, provide a list of co-funding sources, and there will be new confirmation screens throughout the application to affirm understanding of Verdant's funding guidelines.

Anonymous: Do you provide an ad hoc review of grant applications and/or requests if someone misses a deadline?

- Dr. Edwards answered that we cannot accept any applications after the deadline, so that we can remain equitable to all applicants. If you have questions as you are preparing your application, Ms. Konstanski, Grants Manager at Verdant, is available for one-on-one calls to provide support and clarity.

Anonymous: Do you have an equity framework with dispersing funds for grants and etc? Instead of referring to your website with

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your equity statement, what *actions* are you taking ('you' meaning Verdant and the commissioners) to be a more equitable organization?

- Dr. Edwards answered that our commitment to diversity is that we are being transparent for all. Commissioners and staff are required to complete Conflict of Interest paperwork. Verdant moves all grant applications through staff and to review by Commissioners.

Anonymous: It is my understanding that you are making all these changes in response to the decision of Swedish Hospital to move some services to Everett. Is this really about priorities or hoarding money?

- President Distelhorst answered by providing a brief history of Public Hospital District #2 and its former role as Stevens Hospital. Now, PHD#2 has a lease agreement with Swedish who manages the hospital on our behalf and in return PHD#2 receives this rental income from Swedish which we put back out into the community. This isn't an issue about hoarding money. The Board's goal is always to maintain the services of the hospital for our residents. This strategic plan allows us to focus on a few priorities while upholding the agreement with the hospital.

Anonymous: Homelessness was a crisis before COVID hit and has only become worse since 2020. Being unhoused affects one's physical health, mental well-being, personal safety, as well as the ability to get/maintain work. Unhoused people also experience higher rates of food-insecurity. It is great that Verdant will support behavioral health needs of people in the upcoming bridge-motel program that will hopefully be up and running early next year, but what about all the people outside now?

- Dr. Edwards responded that as a public hospital district, we are required to comply with laws for the state of Washington. Guidance that we have received from the state auditor's office and our legal counsel is that Verdant can support wrap around healthcare services that are collocated with housing and we can support temporary housing that is essential for health maintenance.

Anonymous: Will you be having a pre-application meeting/bidders conference when the application opens up?

- Dr. Edwards answered we will continue to host our grants Q&A sessions ahead of each application period. That will be scheduled for early November when the grant application window opens.

**Commissioner  
Comments**

Commissioner Knutsen spoke about the difficult transition the Board is making to align with new priorities. She commented that the pandemic allowed Verdant to put money toward different services

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the community needed at the time that we would not have otherwise funded, because it is what our community needed. We were able to respond to the crisis. Moving forward, the Board is focusing on what we need to do to come out of that crisis.

Commissioner Wilson said that the goal of the Commission is to create transparency and consistency to our community partners and to communicate changes as soon as possible.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:32 a.m. by President Distelhorst.

**ATTEST BY:**

DocuSigned by:  
*JSDistelhorst*  
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President

DocuSigned by:  
*Karianna Wilson*  
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Secretary