



Multnomah County Auditor
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MEMORANDUM

Date: December 20, 2021
To: Jennifer McGuirk, County Auditor
From: Caroline Zavitkovski and Dorian Pacheco
Subject: Pandemic Response Phase 2 - Contact Tracing Audit, Health Department

Authorization

The audit of contact tracing was included in the Auditor's audit schedule for 2021. The last two audits of the Health Department were both in 2019. They focused on Behavioral Health and Integrated Clinical Services.

Recommended Action

We recommend continuing this audit into fieldwork.

Our proposed fieldwork objectives are to:

- Describe how widespread disease transmission (surges) affects the County's case investigation, outbreak investigation, contact tracing, and wraparound services and determine how those programs responded.
- Determine how county leadership and management supported new or expanded programs for case investigation, outbreak investigation, contact tracing, and wraparound service provision.

In addressing these larger objectives, we will also examine:

- How did surges affect the county's ability to provide disease investigation and wraparound services?
- What prioritization decisions did the county make for disease investigation and wraparound service provision, especially during surges?
- What are internal and external barriers to timeliness and completeness of disease investigation and wraparound service provision?
- What are lessons learned for large-scale staff recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and training that could be applied to future emergency responses?
- What are lessons learned for collaborating with community based organizations?
- What are lessons learned for communicating and connecting with cases and contacts?

Survey Activities

Research

We conducted extensive research using a wide range of documents, which include:

- County, state, and federal guidance, reports, plans, dashboards, and frameworks
- The adopted Multnomah County budgets for FY2020 through FY2022
- Contracts with service providers
- Trainings on contact tracing, case investigation, and trauma-informed evaluation

We conducted over 50 interviews with County staff and managers, staff from community-based organizations providing contracted services, and representatives from the Oregon Health Authority and Multnomah Education Service District.

Trauma-Informed Audit

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically affected the health and well-being of many people, including County employees and contractors at all levels. Interviews and other forms of data collection are an integral part of our audit process. We recognize that audit interviews might be difficult, emotional, or even re-traumatizing, especially for those that have been working in challenging environments throughout the course of the pandemic. As such, we committed to adopting a trauma-informed approach to this audit. This means that our audit is grounded in an understanding of trauma and its impacts. We aim for our communications to emphasize transparency, safety, and well-being. We are also creating opportunities for our auditee and participants to build collaboration, understanding, and rapport with us, to the greatest extent possible without compromising our independence.