



# 2024 Annual Report

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Working to shape, support, and strengthen partnerships for public health

# Executive Office of Strategic Partnerships

## Annual Report 2024

*Shape Support Strengthen*

### Overview

**Strong partnerships are essential to public health.** In 2024, the Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP) worked across the agency and across the system to shape, support and strengthen partnerships with the Governmental Public Health System (Local Health Jurisdictions, Tribal public health, and the State Board of Health), the private sector, government agencies, early learning and K-12, higher education, foundations, and other state and national organizations.

OSP serves as a nexus for many essential partnership areas, providing agency and system leadership, expertise, critical connections, guidance, and training to agency and system partners, and ensuring we build ongoing relationships that help increase capacity to achieve public health priorities both in emergencies and every day.

### Partnerships for Public Health

Our office is dedicated to supporting public health priorities:

- **Internally** – Our team provided hundreds of partner-related consultations and connections for Department of Health (DOH) staff and leadership, and supported programs across the agency with in-depth assistance on priority public health issues and initiatives from opioids to workforce development.
- **Externally** – We strengthened existing relationships and created new partnerships in support of the agency and the broader public health system. We developed new collaborations and thought partnerships on technology and other key issues, and began cultivating potential funding streams to explore in 2025.

In this report, we’ve spotlighted just a few highlights from each partnership area. We are grateful to both internal and external partners for their collaboration and commitment to working as a system to support the health and wellness of people across our state.

### Contents

Overview .....	1
OSP Leadership.....	2
Internal and External Partner Resources and Support .....	2
Early Learning and K-12 Partnerships .....	4
Building Public Health Connections with Higher Education .....	6
Supporting Our State’s Governmental Public Health System.....	8
Private Partnerships to Support Public Health .....	11

Contact us at [partnerships@doh.wa.gov](mailto:partnerships@doh.wa.gov).

Published January 2025



Executive Office of Strategic Partnerships  
**Kristopher Holiday**  
 Chief of Partnerships



**Lisa Dutton**  
 Executive Assistant to Kristopher Holiday



## OSP Leadership Team Office & Functions

December 2024

Deputy Chief of Partnerships



**Laura Blaske**

Senior strategist and advisor

---

Policy

---

Oversight of partnership, guidance, training and virtual engagement areas

---

Public-private partnerships planning

---

Risk mitigation

---

Agency/system level priorities and initiatives

---

Appointing authority

Deputy Chief of Operations



**Jill Edgin**

Operational Planning and Readiness

---

Legislative Coordination

---

Oversight of research, administrative and logistical support areas

---

Fiscal oversight

---

Internal Policy Compliance

Executive Director Regional Health Offices



**Jennifer Coiteux**

Senior agency advisor: Local health partners

---

Governmental Public Health System partner engagement and relationship development

---

Regional Office Engagement Planning

---

Key initiatives

---

Liaison Team

Academic Affairs Senior Director



**Carrie Evans**

Senior agency advisor: Higher education partners

---

Higher education partner engagement and relationship development

---

Key initiatives

---

Internal/external partner outreach and resources

---

Engagement planning

Education Engagement Senior Director



**Kim Sanchez**

Senior agency advisor: Early education and K-12 partners

---

K-12 partner engagement and relationship development

---

Key initiatives

---

Internal/external partner outreach and resources

---

Engagement planning

Strategic Initiatives Senior Director



**Julie Hollenbeck**

Virtual engagement initiatives and products

---

Guidance and training

---

Data Modernization and other internal/external collaborations

---

Partner relationship management resources and tracking tools

---

Innovation advisor

OSP Leadership: Not pictured - *Tribal Engagement Director Rosalinda Turk who is in the Office of Tribal Public Health and Relations and matrixes to OSP.*

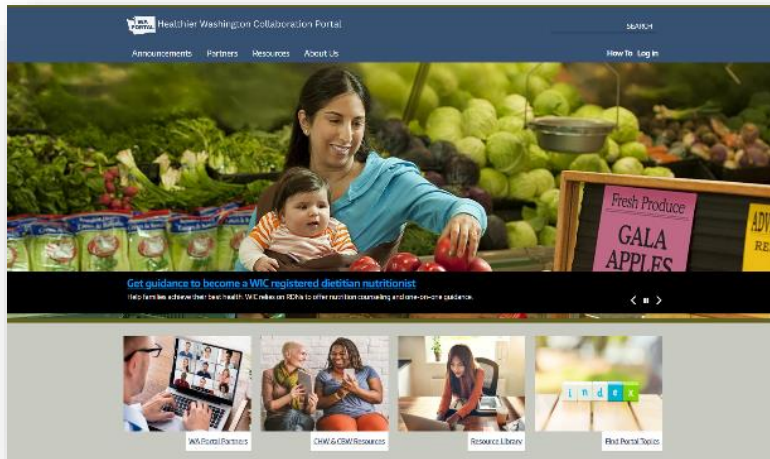
## Internal and External Partner Resources and Support

### Strategic Initiatives

The Strategic Initiatives section is an engine for partner-related innovation and resource support for OSP, the agency, and the system, helping to turn engagement goals into reality. Through guidance, training, resources and effective connection channels, the team helps ensure both internal and external partners have the information and tools they need to succeed in their partnership-related public health work.

### 2024 Highlights

- The **Healthier WA Collaboration Portal** (WA Portal) continued to be a cornerstone for cross-system peer-to-peer collaboration and information sharing for governmental, nonprofit, health care, academic and other health and wellness partners across the state. This free collaboration platform for public health professionals fosters multi-sector partnerships and resource development efforts on priority issues. WA Portal provides a password-protected collaboration space for each peer team, as well as a public-facing microsite with easily accessible tools and information. Serving as a critical hub for uniting partners around shared goals and addressing systemic health disparities, WA Portal had more than **64,000 user visits** this year—a **10,000+ visit increase** over 2023.



The Portal currently supports [35 Partner microsites](#) – and, in 2024, added new partner sites for priority issues including **aging, rural health, medical reserves, housing, drinking water, federal engagement, equity**, and more.

Its sustained growth reflects our commitment to providing resources that continue to meet the diverse and evolving needs of Washington’s public health ecosystem.

- The **Partner Hub**, launched in January 2024, is a new external SharePoint site for the Governmental Public Health System, offering Tribal and Local Health Jurisdiction (LHJ) partners secure, user-friendly access to DOH resources, personnel, meetings, training, and more. With over **16,000 visits** and **650 registered users** to date, the Partner Hub enhances collaboration while it streamlines access to critical tools and information.

*I love this self-serve resource! Every DOH program should be on the Partner Hub. I will encourage my team to check there first. – Local Health partner*

In creating the Partner Hub site, the Strategic Initiatives team collaborated across the agency, working with programs and leadership teams to help them feature information for this important audience. The team also consulted with local partners, using their feedback to make improvements. The Partner Hub is a valuable resource both internally and externally, helping DOH staff spotlight important information, and external public health partners effectively navigate resources, topics, and teams throughout our agency.

- **DOH Digest, our agency’s weekly e-newsletter for LHJ and Tribal health partners**, continued to be an essential communication channel helping DOH teams and leadership regularly share current and new information across the Governmental Public Health System. This year, subscribers opened the Digest **more than 35,000 times**, an average **open rate of 43%**, which surpasses the national rate for governmental newsletters (35%). The Strategic Initiatives team manages this resource, proactively reaching out across the agency for information and editorial review.
- We developed **two new internal resources** in 2024 to help equip DOH teams with foundational agency strategies, process standards, and tools to support successful engagement efforts across all partnership areas. These core guides work in concert with partner-specific guidance and resources available from OSP and other agency offices such as Tribal Public Health and Relations in the Office of Policy, Planning and Evaluation, and Community Relations and Engagement in the Office of Public Affairs and Equity.
  - The **Engagement Essentials Guide** is a comprehensive set of agency standards and tools to help make every partner interaction—from an email to an in-person meeting—more effective for both DOH staff and our external partners. The Guide was developed in response to input from people across the agency who shared challenges and feedback with us, as well as input from external

partners, who asked us to look for ways to help build consistency regarding partner outreach and follow up. The Engagement Essentials Guide is accessible in three ways: through a SharePoint site, a printable PDF, and, beginning in 2025, open-door sessions and team meetings.

- The **Conference & Event Coordination site** is a one-stop shop for agency guidance and resources including process standards for tabling and presenting, how to share outreach materials across programs, and connections for ordering swag and booth/table set-up kits. OSP worked in collaboration with the Office of Public Affairs and Equity and the Office of Resiliency and Health Security to bring all related resources together in one site.

*This is so wonderful; conference help has been needed for years! Thank you OSP!*  
– DOH program leader

## Here to Help

Through these initiatives and others, including supporting partner engagement for **DOH’s Data Modernization Initiative**, the Strategic Initiatives team conducted over **170 initial consultations** with partners both inside and outside the agency—providing guidance, resources, and dedicated support to advance their critical work. These consultations were often the beginning of broader collaborative efforts that included planning, content creation, and strategic promotion to help ensure these public health projects were impactful, meaningful, and successful.



**64,000**

WA PORTAL USER  
VISITS – 10,000  
MORE THAN 2023



**35,000**

TIMES READERS  
OPENED  
DOH DIGEST



**16,000**

PARTNER HUB  
USER VISITS SINCE  
JANUARY LAUNCH

## Support for Children- and Youth-Related Initiatives

### Early Learning and K-12 Partnerships

Healthy children and youth are better positioned to live and learn well. OSP’s Early Learning and K-12 Partnerships team provide strategic consultation and assistance to programs agencywide to support and strengthen their work as it intersects with school spaces. The Senior Director of Early Learning and K-12 Partnerships also regularly works with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Educational Service Districts, schools, state and local government agencies, children- and youth-related service organizations, and public health partners, building lasting relationships to support the health and well-being of our state’s youngest residents.

In 2024, the team had dozens of initial consultations and ongoing collaborations with agency teams and senior leaders, helping them to better:

- Understand WA school systems
- Navigate K-12 school and childcare partnerships
- Connect peer-to-peer and across agencies
- Identify opportunities for youth outreach
- Develop effective information and resources for schools, parents and/or youth
- Create plans and strategies
- Access a range of education communication channels

The team also supported legislative activities related to early learning and K-12 education, including monitoring legislation, writing bill analyses (over 20 bills in 2024) and providing input into fiscal notes.

From quickly responding to urgent requests to providing ongoing expertise, planning and support on school-related issues, the Early Learning and K-12 Team has worked across the agency and across the broader system this year to support children and youth, and the public health and education professionals who work for—and with—them.

## 2024 Highlights

- Successfully launched **two websites for childcare and K-12 school partners**. This year the [Safety Study Hall | Washington State Department of Health](#) and the [Early Care and Education | Washington State Department of Health](#) joins our anchor site [Schools | Washington State Department of Health](#) (created in 2023). Each website includes curated DOH and other governmental resources for a one-stop shop experience for school partners.
- Supported K-12 systemwide DOH initiatives including **naloxone kits in every public high school**, serving as a liaison between DOH subject matter experts and regional Educational Services Districts (ESDs) statewide. OSP advised on outreach materials for families, facilitated ESD partner training for distribution with the DOH Drug User Health Team, and supported school and ESD questions and requests.
- Led the implementation of **HB 1230: DOH resources including overdose recognition and response, and the secure storage of medications and firearms for K-12 schools**. OSP convened content subject matter experts, reviewed and integrated their feedback, and supported a small communication team to build the [website](#), design the brand and structure, and prepare and provide support materials to K-12 schools.
- Provided school subject matter expertise in the State Board of Health's **School Environmental Health and Safety Rule project (WAC 246-366A)** to the Board, their policy advisors, and the Environmental Public Health leadership and school program team. OSP advises on the feasibility of potential rules, the impact of rule language, and the complexity of school spaces anchored in Washington state laws and rules.
- Created and maintained peer-to-peer collaboratives and learning opportunities including:
  - **WA/OR/CA School Public Health Collaborative**. Convened representatives from WA, OR, and CA state departments of health monthly on a range of school-related topics (e.g., infectious disease, childhood immunizations, naloxone in schools, and more). This group continues to have a robust connection, regularly sharing resources and discussing priority public health topics and their alignment to schools.
  - **DOH K-12 Collaborative Teams Channel**. Maintained the channel and SharePoint site that includes all internal members and teams whose work intersects with early learning and/or K-12 schools.
  - **DOH/OSPI School Nurse Advisory**. Started a Public Health School Nurse Advisory for representatives from DOH, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the educational service districts, School Nurses of Washington (SNOW), and school nurses across the state. The Advisory provides an opportunity for bidirectional discussion and feedback to inform relevant DOH guidance and programs. It also relays critical information and resources to local school districts.

- **DOH/OSPI School Nurse Connects.** Co-hosted a quarterly statewide webinar for school nurses on a range of public health topics. Speakers are DOH subject matter experts who present on key topics and host questions, answers and discussion. 2024 topics included:
  - Naloxone in K-12 Schools, opioid response, harm reduction
  - Traumatic Brain Injuries and K-12 concussion reporting
  - Infectious Disease (COVID-19, pertussis, outbreak response)
- Developed **School Lunch**, a new series of virtual presentations and discussions on shared public health and K-12 schools' priorities. Subject matter experts from DOH, OSPI and other school partners will present on topics including school nurses, public health practitioners, the landscape of health services in schools, and opportunities to address health disparities through partnership. The series kicks off in January 2025. [Get details on the Jan. 8 School Lunch event here.](#)

## Building Public Health Connections with Higher Education

### Academic Affairs

The OSP Academic Partnerships team cultivates, supports, and amplifies relationships with both public and private higher education institutions (IHEs) across the state. This includes collaborations to advance innovative research, strengthen public health workforce development efforts, and guide other strategic initiatives for DOH with the statewide academic community.

The Senior Director of Academic Affairs also worked closely with leadership from the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, the Council of Presidents, Independent Colleges of Washington, the Washington Training & Education Coordinating Board, and the Washington Student Achievement Council, as well as leadership, faculty, staff and students from colleges and universities across the state.

From ongoing substantive support on significant projects and initiatives to one-time or short-term consultations, the team worked across the public health and higher education systems to support internal and external partners in advancing public health priorities. In 2024, the team:

- Broadened awareness of the intersections between IHEs and public health
- Helped effectively frame projects to better ensure success across both systems
- Connected subject matter experts and leadership
- Identified opportunities for public health collaborations with both academic staff and students
- Developed effective information and resources for public health and the academic community
- Created plans and strategies for key initiatives

From finding the appropriate academic partners for State Health Improvement Alliance (SHIP) to facilitating connections for DOH's Climate & Health team to Yakima Valley College (YVC) leadership, which successfully led to YVC [hosting a pollen monitor on their campus](#), we've worked with dozens of DOH programs this year, navigating the academic landscape to create—and support—the right connections.

We also regularly worked with leadership, offices and program teams across the agency. In 2024, OSP's Academic Partnerships team provided consultation and, often, ongoing support to teams and divisions across the agency from the Office of Health & Science (OHS) to the Office of Policy, Planning & Evaluation (OPPE), the Office of Public Affairs & Equity (OPAE), Prevention & Community Health (PCH), Disease Control & Health Statistics (DCHS), the Office of Innovation & Technology (OIT), Health Systems Quality Assurance (HSQA), Environmental Public Health (EPH), the Office of Global One (OGO), and the Office of Resiliency & Health Security (ORHS).

## 2024 Highlights

- Successfully launched the **Pathways Summer Paid Internship Program**. The program yielded over 400 applications for the Summer 2024 cohort, selecting an exceptionally diverse group of 15 undergraduate and graduate students from colleges and universities statewide. The interns reported that the program advanced their career goals and boosted their confidence and understanding about public health. The program, envisioned by the Senior Director of Academic Affairs and funded by the CDC Public Health Infrastructure Grant (PHIG), is housed in DOH's Workforce Pathways Program and will continue through Summer 2027.
- Fostered academic and public health practice collaboration through the expansion of the **WA Public Health Academic Learning Collaborative (PHALCO)**. In fall 2024, we convened over 50 PHALCO partners for an in-person gathering at Yakima Valley College. We also launched a [PHALCO site](#) on the WA Portal (see more information on WA Portal in this report), featuring a new Resource Hub and an interactive map of public health degree programs in Washington State. Our new [Public Health Careers in WA monthly series](#) had 255 registrants as of late December 2024.
- Hosted the **Future of AI & the Health Sciences Summit**, convening over 100 partners from across academia, government, philanthropic and community-based organizations, and the private sector. Evaluation feedback was exceptionally positive, with 93% of respondents sharing that they would “very likely” attend a future Summit. Attendees appreciated hearing from national and regional experts and the opportunity for cross-sectoral engagement. For session recordings and summaries: [AI Summit site](#).
- Supported the implementation of **HB 2112: opioid and fentanyl prevention and education for higher education institutions**, serving as a liaison between DOH subject matter experts and colleges and universities statewide. Over 150 higher education staff and administrators registered for DOH hosted opioid overdose prevention and response trainings at the start of the 2024-25 academic year. OSP developed outreach materials and facilitated academic partner requests, with the DOH Drug User Health Team, for naloxone and fentanyl test strips.
- Developed and **launched a new [Higher Education website](#)** that serves as a one-stop connection point for our academic partners to news and resources from across our agency. Faculty and administrators can now easily access information on public health research collaborations, workforce development efforts, and other strategic priorities to support the health and well-being of campus communities and people throughout Washington. Post-secondary students may also connect to internship and other experiential learning opportunities in public health.





# Supporting Our State’s Governmental Public Health System

## About Regional Health Offices

DOH Regional Health Offices (RHOs) are an essential connection to our agency’s staff, information, and resources for partners statewide. RHO’s support Local Health Jurisdictions, Tribal public health, and other partners *where they are* in ways that best meet local needs.

There are four RHOs statewide. Each includes a Regional Liaison and a Regional Medical Officer. These teams often work together to provide a wide range of support to partners.

- The **Regional Liaisons** are managed through the Executive Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP).
- **Regional Medical Officers** are managed through the Executive Office of Health and Science (OHS).

**NOTE: This report provides 2024 highlights from OSP’s RHO Team only.**

*For information on Regional Medical Officer activities, please connect with OHS.*

[For more information including an organizational chart and contacts, see the RHO website.](#)

## OSP Regional Health Office Team

Regional Liaisons work in their areas of the state to help improve access to technical assistance and support, as well as to develop deeper connections with local partners on important public health priorities. Working in coordination with the Governmental Public Health System and other partners, regional staff also connect with communities and organizations to help broaden their understanding of local priorities and provide needed information and resources across the state.

The OSP RHO Team also regularly works with DOH leadership, internal subject matter experts, and programs to bring perspectives from across the state that help inform—and improve—projects, messaging, processes, and policies. Similarly, the team works with state agency partners as well, bringing local insights and connections to agencies including the Health Care Authority and the Department of Social and Health Services.

Strong partnerships with local and Tribal public health helps DOH work as a coordinated part of a connected public health system, supporting health and wellness for all people in our state.

## 2024 Highlights

### **Leadership Convening**

In 2024, the OSP RHO Team planned and supported two statewide leadership convening meetings with leaders from Local Health Jurisdictions and the Washington State Department of Health (DOH). RHO leadership and Regional Liaisons partnered with the Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials (WSALPHO) to develop meaningful agendas, facilitate the meetings, support participation, and manage continued follow up efforts after each meeting.

These meetings provided important opportunities to connect in-person and take a system approach to critical public health issues in our state. The first meeting focused on the public health system’s capability and responsibility to respond to the opioid crisis facing our state. The second meeting focused on access to healthcare issues and the public health system’s role, local experiences, and how to move forward as a system. The team will continue to engage with WSALPHO and DOH leadership on planning and operationalizing next steps.

### ***Tribal Health Engagement***

Regional Liaisons and OSP leadership worked closely with the Tribal Engagement Director in 2024 to increase participation in Tribal meetings, visit Tribal clinics and Tribal partners, and learn more about Tribal public health issues and ways to better work as a system. One success this year was connecting with Tribal health partners regarding the HEAL Act Capacity and Workplace Health & Safety Grants. This increased Tribal participation in the grant and helped ensure resources were shared more equitably. Regional Liaisons also participated in the Northwest Tribal Public Health Emergency Preparedness Conference, Tribal Opioid Summit, and the State and Tribal Leaders Health Summit.

### ***Workforce Development***

2024 represented the first full year since the COVID-19 pandemic ended. The response activities supported by the public health system impacted employees both emotionally and physically, underscoring the need to support our workforce. The RHO Executive Director serves on the joint (local health and DOH) Workforce Development Steering Committee, and the whole OSP RHO Team partnered with DOH leaders, academic professionals and local health partners to create and provide ongoing support to workgroups on public health recruitment, development, and retention.

Regional Liaisons worked with Dr. Kira Mauseth to offer all Local Health Jurisdictions and their staff a virtual 4-part learning series on *Resiliency and Wellbeing in the Workplace* at no cost to them. Regional Liaisons also provided outreach, registration, scheduling, and technical assistance for the series. More than 100 local health staff members across the state joined to learn about topics such as social connection, adaptability, and organizational culture development.

### **Bi-directional Communication and Connections**

The OSP RHO Team played an essential role in supporting bi-directional communication by ensuring timely access to information, as well as proactively collecting and sharing feedback between local partners and with agency programs/leadership. They also helped inform policy and process development at the agency by ensuring a local perspective was considered. A few examples from the past year include:

- Regional Liaisons supported data systems through access to raw data, dashboards, reporting systems like WDRS, and data collection systems like RHINO. Through these connections we identified critical feedback from partners that is currently being used to help with legislative priorities for our state's data sharing rules.
- The OSP RHO Team regularly provided connections and follow ups for LHJs and programs across the agency on a wide variety of questions and issues from health promotion and communication to environmental health wildfire smoke resources to state standing orders for naloxone. The team also works with the DOH Office of Financial Services, helping local partners navigate funding and consolidated contract question.
- Regional Liaisons also played a key role in ensuring DOH agency messaging reached our local health partners. Our office shares important messages for emergencies (i.e. wildfire smoke; avian flu (HPAI) response), funding opportunities, and significant program changes. Messages coming from trusted partners have a higher read rate. Regional Liaisons also followed up through check-ins and monthly regional and statewide meetings.
- The OSP RHO Team worked internally to bring a partner engagement perspective to our agency initiatives. We participated in workgroups including Data Modernization Initiatives, Data Governance Board, Statute

Harmonizing Committee, One Health Workgroup, Preparedness Workgroups, and HPAI Readiness Workgroup. We also bring the DOH perspective to external forums like the WSPHA Board of Directors.

## Internal Program Support

The OSP RHO Team provided training, resources, and consultation services for agency teams and leadership. During 2024, OSP RHO Team members met with teams across the agency to provide guidance on reaching target partner groups and collaborate on messaging and resources to improve outcomes.

The team also developed and facilitated a monthly meeting space where program staff across DOH who intersect with governmental system partners can connect to share updates, develop engagement best practices, and align communication efforts. The OSP RHO Team also met with program leaders across the agency to provide an overview of the RHOs and how they can be used to engage or collaborate with partners.

## Regional Meeting Pilot for New Public Health Professionals

The OSP RHO Team has received numerous requests from local public health leaders to create regional learning and connection opportunities for their new public health program staff. Many of these staff are new to the public health system in Washington state, or new to public health. Local leaders wanted to help newer staff make peer connections and learn about our state's system.

In 2024, we worked with local health partners in Region 3 to plan and hold an in-person regional pilot session at our Tumwater office. Along with program-specific presentations, and connections to DOH and local health staff, the day included a Public Health 101 course. The session was a great success and more will be planned across the state in 2025. The response to the pilot was extremely positive, as reflected by these sample comments:



*I want to express my appreciation for you and all at DOH trying to make things better for us LHJ's and all the new people out here trying to do good in public health. I am very hopeful for some positive change arising out of the meeting and look forward to participating with anything in the future.*  
**– LHJ participant**

*This was a very nice intro to DOH and public health. It was an enjoyable experience to be able to speak with other LHJ representatives to know they have similar issues with administering programs in the public health arena as new or new to WA PH professionals. I can see these being a great tool for the future.*  
**– LHJ participant**

## Direct Support to Local Health

Regional Liaisons regularly connect with their local partners. Along with continuing to build important relationships, Regional Liaisons look for ways the agency might provide support.

DOH staff are eager to help local partners but don't always know what support is needed. Having Regional Liaisons in the field streamlines communication and help.

### Here is one example from 2024:

A Local Health Jurisdiction leader shared that they had experienced significant turnover in their staff and could benefit from DOH resources as they worked to rebuild their department. The Regional Liaison was able to work with them and DOH staff to provide support for communicable disease, epidemiology, and environmental health. This support involved providing relevant resource documents, linking to process support from neighboring Local Health Jurisdictions, and onsite staff support from DOH for food inspections and communicable disease training.

Over the course of a year, the Regional Liaison was also able to bring in a Senior Nurse Consultant from DOH to work with the local leadership to develop workflows, review processes, learn and implement best-practices, provide just-in-time training for an outbreak response, and support new employee orientation and training.

### Learning Opportunities for Partners

The OSP RHO Team also tracks issues of interest to local partners, and developed several regional/statewide learning opportunities throughout the year, including:

- **Environmental health issues associated with homelessness.** DOH's Community Health Strategies for Homelessness Manager discussed strategies for addressing environmental health issues associated with homelessness. Some areas of interest included supporting sanitation needs in encampments, and addressing exposure to extreme heat, cold, and poor air quality due to wildfire smoke. Based on feedback from local health administrators, the Community Health Strategies for Homelessness Manager and Regional Liaisons collaborate on a quarterly basis to invite presentations from key partners and hold peer discussions with subject matter experts from DOH and Local Health Jurisdictions.
- Human Services staff from **Washington's Emergency Management Division** presented on the Extreme Weather Grant Program which aims to reimburse eligible local governments for costs incurred in responding to community needs for vulnerable populations during periods of extremely hot or cold weather or severe poor air quality from wildfire smoke. The Regional Liaison engaged with partners to share reminders about the grant funding and facilitated discussions for funding implementation. This resulted in six Local Health Jurisdictions from Regions 1 and 2 applying for funding and bringing extra needed resources to their communities.
- DOH Office of Resilience and Health Security staff provided an overview of current **wildfire smoke and extreme weather resources and assistance** available to Local Health Jurisdictions. This included communication and technical resources, Portable Air Cleaner distribution guidance, and an overview of a DOH data dashboard which provides near-real time information to help monitor the impacts of seasonal hazards.

## Private Partnerships to Support Public Health

### Private Sector Engagement

The Department of Health developed strong collaborations with the private sector during the COVID-19 response. In past responses (for example, H1N1) the agency did not work to maintain these important relationships once the

emergency ended. As our response to COVID sunset, DOH leadership were determined to continue these valuable connections and develop new partnerships with the private sector to support ongoing public health priorities.

Spearheaded by OSP's Chief of Partnerships, OSP has worked to maintain and further develop relationships with private sector partners who were active in the COVID response (Apple, Google, Amazon and others) as well as forge new collaborative relationships within the tech, retail, sports and health care sectors.

In over 150 collaborative meetings with businesses, foundations and other organizations throughout 2024, we cultivated these relationships to help ensure that public health was seen as a vital force and an innovative partner for improving the lives of people in our state. These meetings have resulted in important thought partnerships with industry leaders, as well as opportunities to collaborate on information and resources that can benefit the public health system statewide.

This work is important to the agency's ability to support the broader public health system, especially in an evolving funding environment. In 2025, the Chief and Deputy Chief of Partnerships will continue work to further develop potential resources for state and local public health priorities with many of these partners.

## 2024 Highlights

### *Technology*

In 2024, OSP worked in close partnership with the DOH Office of Information and Technology (OIT) to drive public health data and technology priorities forward. These partnerships not only provided the agency with valuable resources and expertise but also created opportunities for groundbreaking projects that will benefit our state and its residents. Here are a few examples:

#### *Amazon Web Services (AWS)*

- **Executive Visioning Sessions:** Our engagements with AWS included several high-level visioning sessions. These discussions paved the way for two major innovation projects focused on environmental health within the state. These projects are poised to deliver impactful solutions that address critical environmental concerns.

#### *Microsoft*

- **Resource and Expertise Access:** The ability to quickly access Microsoft's resources and expertise has been invaluable. This immediate support has saved agency tech teams considerable time, enhancing their productivity and enabling faster project turnarounds.
- **Cost Reductions on Licenses:** Our strategic partnership with Microsoft has resulted in significant cost reductions on software licenses. This financial benefit is a direct outcome of our strong collaborative relationship, allowing us to allocate resources more efficiently.

#### *Indirect Benefits*

Along with primary benefits listed above, these partnerships resulted in:

- **Enhanced Collaboration:** Across all partnerships, we've seen improved cross-departmental collaboration, fostering a more innovative and cohesive working environment.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** These partnerships have facilitated knowledge exchange, keeping our teams abreast of the latest technologies and best practices in the industry.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Aligning with these key partners has ensured that our technological advancements are in sync with broader industry trends and standards.

## Public Health Perspectives

**Public Health Connects** is a speaker series developed to advance health equity, spotlight innovative ideas, and foster collaborative partner engagement throughout the health and wellness system — and beyond. OSP worked

in collaboration with the Office of Public Affairs and Equity (OPAE) on the series hosted by Secretary of Health Dr. Umair Shah.

**In 2024, we featured:**

- *Rx for a Lonely Nation*. Dr. Vivek Murthy, U.S. Surgeon General
- *Designing for Experience*. Brad Anderson, President, Products, UX, Engineering and Ecosystem, Qualtrics

We also supported OPAE on a series of interviews recorded live at the 2024 American Public Health Association's (APHA) Annual Meeting and Expo. These conversations feature 11 of the nation's leading health innovators who share their insights on health equity, health challenges, and building healthier communities for all.

**APHA interviewees included:**

- Dr. Georges C. Benjamin, Executive Director, American Public Health Association
- Dr. Eduardo Sanchez, Chief Medical Officer for Prevention, American Heart Association
- Dr. Judy Monroe, President and CEO, CDC Foundation

[See all Public Health Connects episodes here.](#)

## Youth and Communities

In 2024, OSP collaborated with agency programs to test new ways of increasing public health awareness and access to services—such as immunizations—by working with two area sports teams.

Focusing on youth, the agency sponsored several events for youth and families with the Seattle Storm, including a STEM Kids Day (12,500 attendance), two Storm Basketball Clinics for youth (one event partnering with the Special Olympics), and one Storm Academy for Unified Coaches from Special Olympics.

The agency was also a sponsor for the Seattle Seahawks “Player’s Community Picks” which spotlighted community organizations including the Hearing, Speech and Deaf Center of Seattle, and Shades of Motherhood in Spokane. Five community-based organizations were also highlighted as part of a “Giving Tuesday” event including Northwest Indian Health Board, Central Washington Disability Resources, Manzanita House, New World International, and Reclaim.

## Direct Support to Agency Programs

Our office offered direct support to agency programs this year in connecting with private sector partners, planning events, and working on multi-sector initiatives. A few representative examples include:

- Collaborated with the Office of Policy, Planning and Evaluation (OPPE) on their landscape analysis and literature review report, *An Economic Case for Addressing Cross-Sector Issues through Partnership to Improve Population Health*. With our OPPE colleagues, we hope this report will offer frameworks and recommendations that help other public agencies develop mutually beneficial relationships with the private sector.
- Provided project management support for multi-sector events such as the Women, Infants and Children program’s (WIC) 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary community celebration.
- Created and maintained an Event Hub SharePoint site, showcasing public health-related conferences and events for agency leaders and staff, as well as abstract deadlines, and DOH attendees/presenters.
- Consultations with teams agencywide to identify key issues and appropriate partners for events and initiatives such as a multi-sector emergency preparedness and response tabletop exercise, the State Health Improvement Plan, the agency’s Transformational Plan, and discussions on public health priorities. Researched alignments with private sector partners to bring the right people to these efforts.