

Early Learning Hub of Linn, Benton & Lincoln Counties Health Care Integration Work Group Meeting Minutes

MEETING COMMENCED	9:30 am, May 12, 2026 Online Via Zoom
MEETING CALLED BY	Ashley Vermillion
PRESENTERS	Cassie Aguilar, Linn County Health Department, Immunization Program Coordinator
WORKGROUP MEMBERS PRESENT	Amy Bliege, Monica Boylan, Barbie Bruton, Karol Elizondo, Gaby Esquivel, Ash Gladstone, Kat Lavigne, Kristty Polanco, Paul Smith, Desiree Stang, Sara Yaeggy
STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT	Kristi Collins, Matt Grams, Antonia Huerta, Jinguang Lin, Sam Rounsavell, Carmen Santacruz, Leanne Trask
RECORDED	Yes

Agenda Topics

Discussion Item	Welcome and Introductions
Workgroup members introduced themselves in the chat.	

Special Presentation	Cassie Aguilar, Linn County Health Department, Immunization Program Coordinator
<p>Cassandra Aguilar, Immunization Program Coordinator for Linn County, provided a comprehensive overview of the county's immunization program, highlighting its role in the Vaccine Access Program (VAP). This program ensures that vaccines are available to all individuals regardless of insurance status. Key initiatives include the federally funded Vaccines for Children (VFC) program for those aged 0–18 and the 317 program for uninsured adults. While the county prioritizes no- or low-cost options, it also manages the Oregon Billables program to accommodate those with private insurance.</p> <p>She presented the 2025 Annual Statistics and Impact report. The program administered 419 individual doses of vaccine to 228 patients. The county successfully conducted outreach events, including a mobile clinic in Sweet Home that provided free flu vaccinations to the local houseless population.</p> <p>Cassandra addressed the 2026 measles outbreak, noting that Linn County confirmed the state's first two cases in January. Although the case count was low, the response required extensive resources for contact tracing and school coordination. The county's current K–12 vaccination rate is 93.5%, which is slightly below the 95% threshold required for optimal community herd immunity.</p> <p>She discussed mobile outreach and appointments. The program emphasizes community accessibility through a mobile vaccine van and pop-up events at locations like Colonial Paz, Lafayette Elementary, and the Albany Boys and Girls Club. These events involve cross-departmental collaboration with the maternal-child health and IT teams to provide services such as transferring records into the ALERT system.</p>	

She shared that Immunization services are available at the following Linn County locations:

- Main Office: Albany (across from Albany General Hospital)
- Satellite Offices: Lebanon and Sweet Home (available by appointment)

Families can schedule appointments by calling the office or using the pre-registration link and QR code on the Linn County Health Department website. Partners are encouraged to invite the immunization team to future community events to facilitate broader access to vaccines.

Discussion Item	Partner Updates
<p>Kat Lavigne from Lincoln County Public Health gave the following updates. The third annual Spring Family Fest is scheduled for May 16th from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at the Yachats Commons. The event includes crafts, games, entertainers, and a fire truck display. Health services will be available on-site, including vaccination clinics and resource tables. The health promotion team will also provide a presentation on safe medication storage and distribute free medication lock boxes.</p> <p>WIC Farm Direct vouchers for fresh produce and herbs are available to enrolled participants on a first-come, first-served basis. Distribution will take place at the Newport Market on June 13th and the Lincoln City Market on June 14th, both from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Participants can contact the WIC office for further details.</p> <p>Two community support groups are available to the public without enrollment requirements. The Early Connections group, for pregnant individuals and caregivers of children up to age 3, meets on the first Wednesday of the month in Lincoln City, with a nurse and a bilingual interpreter present. The Parents as Teachers Family Fun Time groups serve families with children ages 0–5; meetings are held on the last Thursday of the month in Lincoln City (10:00 am – 12:00 pm) and on the last Tuesday of the month in Newport (10:30 am – 12:00 pm). English and Spanish flyers for these programs were shared in the meeting chat.</p>	<p>Monica Boylan, from Linn County Public Health, shared that Linn County staffing remains stable, though the primary Spanish-speaking nurse will soon begin maternity leave. To maintain coverage for Spanish-speaking families, the team is partnering with Karol from Benton County, who will assist with Friday check-ins. Additionally, Linn County is expanding its regional collaboration by taking over the Family Connects birth population for Lincoln County. Interviews for a new position to support these visits are scheduled for Wednesday, to hire before the new fiscal year. Referral processes remain unchanged, as all referrals will continue to funnel through Lincoln County before being forwarded to the Linn County team.</p> <p>The county is also transitioning its childbirth education partnership with Young Roots following the departure of the previous lead educator. Tiffany will now serve as the primary contact and will train existing staff on the curriculum. Childbirth education classes are scheduled to begin in July and will continue quarterly. Finally, the Linn County office remains an active construction zone, which has impacted parking and navigation. Staff is advised to notify patients of these conditions, though construction is expected to conclude by late June.</p> <p>Barbie Bruton from Benton County Public Health shared that Benton County WIC will be present at the Corvallis Farmers Market on June 27th and July 11th from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm. In-office voucher distributions are scheduled for June 16th and July 15th, 8:00 am – 12:30 pm. These events will include children's planting activities with windowsill planters. Regarding home visiting services, the</p>

tri-county area is working toward a data-sharing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Samaritan Health Services. This agreement aims to provide a weekly report of births to ensure 100% of newborns in Benton, Linn, and Lincoln counties are offered Family Connects services.

The Reproductive Health program has received tentative approval to expand RH Care-certified sites to five community health centers across Benton and Linn counties, with a target launch in September. This expansion, supported by \$30,000 in funding from Upstream, will ensure comprehensive contraceptive inventories are available at all locations. In public health immunizations, the department reported progress in school and childcare immunization rates following the first six months of the new public health nurse's tenure. Additionally, a regional tabletop exercise for a measles outbreak simulation is planned for late May to strengthen inter-county coordination.

An update was provided regarding Hantavirus following a recent outbreak restricted to a cruise ship. As of May 8th, there were five confirmed cases and three fatalities. While this specific strain allows for human-to-human transmission through close contact, it is not airborne, and the risk to the general public remains very low. Health officials are monitoring exposed individuals for 42 days, and cases are expected to plateau as the incubation period concludes. One Oregon resident was identified on the ship but has not yet returned to the state.

Alisha DeVogele from IHN-CCO provided updates by email. The IHN-CCO is currently finalizing a collaborative grant for the Reproductive Health Training Project (RHTP) and is incorporating feedback from committed community partners. Additionally, the Delivery System Transformation (DST) Committee is finalizing the request for proposals for the 2026 grant season. Community partners interested in piloting new programs that address regional health needs and align with the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) may apply for grants of up to \$150,000.

Interested partners are invited to attend meetings held every other Thursday from 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm, with the next session scheduled for May 14th. Inquiries or requests to join the listserv should be directed to transformation@samhealth.org.

Kristy Polanco from OHA provided updates on significant Medicaid policy changes resulting from Federal House Resolution 1 (H.R. 1). These changes will affect Oregon Health Plan (OHP) and Healthier Oregon program members, with several transitions scheduled over the next year. Partners are encouraged to help members keep their contact information up to date to ensure a seamless transition and to redirect specific case inquiries to the OHA client services unit.

Starting in October 2026, specific immigrant populations—including refugees, asylum seekers, and those under humanitarian parole—will transition from the standard OHP program to the Healthier Oregon program. While benefits such as medical, dental, and behavioral health remain identical, this shift is due to updated federal immigration requirements for standard Medicaid. Furthermore, effective January 2027, Healthier Oregon members will transition from Coordinated Care Organizations (such as IHN-CCO) to a state-managed, open-card, fee-for-service model. While benefits will not change, members may need to find new providers if their current doctors do not have a direct contract with the state.

Beginning in January 2027, a work-or-activity requirement will be implemented for OHP and Healthier Oregon members aged 19 to 64. Members must complete and document 80 hours per

month of qualifying activities, which include employment, education, job training, or volunteering. Proof of activity can be submitted via the online "ONE" eligibility system or through community partners. Certain groups are exempt from these requirements, including individuals with disabilities, those in substance use disorder treatment, and caregivers of children under the age of 14.

Stephen March, from ODHS, detailed several budgetary adjustments to support services for individuals participating in the TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) JOBS program. These services are specifically for participants working with a family coach and are not available to the general public. Effective immediately, housing supports are capped at an annual maximum of \$3,500 and are limited to a total of four months of support. Additionally, auto repair payments have been discontinued as a qualifying support service. Regarding SNAP benefits, most participants seeking a replacement EBT card must now use the designated replacement line unless a specific hardship is documented.

He also provided information regarding the Summer EBT program, which provides \$120 per school-aged child for the summer months. Most eligible families receiving benefits are enrolled automatically, though others may apply online starting in June. Stephen emphasized that immigration status is not used to determine eligibility for Summer EBT, and families who do not qualify for other programs based on status are encouraged to apply. These benefits are time-sensitive and must be used within 122 days of issuance.

Kristi Collins announced that the Lebanon School District has added a new **Preschool Promise** site at Lacombe Elementary. The application process is now open, with a focus on families residing in the Lacombe and Hamilton Creek attendance areas. This addition marks an expansion of services into a previously underserved area.

Ashley Vermillion provided details on an upcoming Spanish-language **Nurturing Parenting course through Family Tree Relief Nursery**. The program consists of a 14-week curriculum held every Thursday from 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm, with a scheduled break for Thanksgiving. The course is open to the entire community and does not require participants to be established clients. To support attendance, the program will provide snacks and on-site childcare. While the organizers recommend attending all sessions, participants only need to meet an 80% attendance threshold if they require a formal certificate of completion. English and Spanish flyers are currently being finalized for distribution.

Discussion Item	Pollywog Update
Sam reviewed the May Pollywog Parent newsletter and discussed the themes of upcoming events.	
Pollywog has also launched two new digital calendars on its website. The Community Events Calendar is designed for families and lists events throughout the three-county region, allowing users to subscribe to the full schedule or save individual events to their personal calendars. A Partner Resources Calendar has been introduced at the bottom of the partner resource page. This calendar focuses specifically on partner opportunities such as tabling events and trainings.	

Next Meeting	9:30 am, June 9, 2026 Online Via Zoom
Meeting Adjourned	10:30 am

