



Curry County Public Health Administrator

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April 16th, 2021

Dear Ms. Banks,

This is in response to your letter dated April 8th, 2021. Yes, the past eighteen months or so has been a challenging one indeed. I can say since the start of my employment on January 24th, 2020 here at Curry County, all I have been doing is digging Public Health out of a whole. I would like to shine a little light on what I and my team have been going through since we started here at Curry County.

First off, PE: 43 School Exclusion Packets were mailed out by the sub-contractor but the communication and processing of orders still had to occur which is what I did immediately and I singled handily processed and mailed out school exclusion letters to all facilities and met the deadline for that Exclusion date on time (btw thank you to the state Immunization team for guiding me through this process).

Just shortly after school exclusion was finalized then a Shangela outbreak happened in a local daycare. I was the only person working in Public Health at the time and requested help from the state CD team to help CCPH and our community through this. (Thank you for the state CD team coming down to help me through this time frame) fast forward a week after the outbreak and we had to deal with 3 U-Haul deliveries of Public Health equipment and supplies coming back to the county un announced and had to be inventoried. There was no storage space let alone office space to house the in-coming supplies and staff. But low and behold we (I) survived that and managed to serve the public while undergoing circumstance beyond our control.

Curry County Public Health did not have staff hired until March 1st, 2020. This is the staff that the county was obligated to have to take back from the sub-contracted at the higher wage they were making at their previous employer for one year). Then I just started onboarding staff and when COVID-19 hits with no infrastructure in place but with a very small and mighty team we were able to serve the community. During this time an 24/7 CD reporting and after hours reporting phone and fax line was established. A new Public Health webpage was designed and implemented at www.currypublichealth.com.

An IMT was put into place with an IC, Safety, PIO, Logistics team, where we coordinated with Long term care facilities, hospital, ems, fire, LE, Emergency manager and over the boarder Stateline partners, to coordinate testing capacities, PPE supplies. The small but mighty team came together to fit in their roles. The ever changing pandemic has taken a toll on all.

Fast forward to one year later and Public Health has lost the original team due higher paying jobs. CCPH is now forced to start all over again. I would like you to know that it is not the failure of the Public Health Administrator for the reason we are here today but due to circumstances beyond my control.

Below is an outline of where we stand regarding the following programs.

- PE#1, State Support for Public Health (including COVID-19 response). CCPH currently has a 24/7 CD reportable disease fax line 541-896-6004 and the Public can reach Public Health after hours by calling the Curry County Sheriff's number of 541-247-3242 or 911 for any medical emergency.

As for Contract tracing and investigation of Covid-19, we have 3 county employees. One who is on light duty from the Sheriff's Office and assigned to Public Health to conduct contact tracing and investigation, and two other county employees, Code Enforcement crew, who have already gone through arias training and has conducted case investigation and contact training already. Plus I have been informed that we are slotted for another light duty deputy to be assigned to Public Health for Contact tracing and Investigation.

Also, CCPH has MOU's in place with CBO's, Brookings Harbor Community Helpers, Southern Oregon Resource Center and Coos Elderly to help assist with culturally linguistically needs. (CCPH did have a bilingual employee up until their resignation in February.) Also, the Public Health Administrator is able and willing to conduct contact tracing and investigation when needed.

- PE#12 – Public Health Emergency Preparedness - We currently have this position advertised on the Curry County Website as well as on Neo Gov website. We have conducted two rounds of interviews for this position. The first round of interviews that was conducted we had a candidate and that candidate pulled their application prior to offer. We just recently conducted interviews last week. We interviewed a candidate who showed interest in Phep position as well as the WIC Coordinator position. This candidate has been given a conditional offer, has accepted the offer for WIC Coordinator board approval. The Phep Coordinator position is still currently open– As for the Phep Work plan we just completed our mid-year review and we are on track. As well as we have been still activity participating in tribe calls, and the PHA has been actively engaging with the CCO's, All care and Advance Health in regards to the Curry Health Improvement Plan and Curry Health Assessment plan and participating in State calls and Pelican Bay State Prison ICP Calls.

We are still actively seeking to fill this position as soon as possible.

- PE#43 Immunization Services, all school exclusion letters have been sent out just need to finalize input of 8 facilities data review. The data review fell behind due to losing staff. The PHA is actively working on this and timeframe to complete this has been pushed to next week due to waiting on a couple of reports to come in from facilities.

In regards to hiring for this position, this position is currently assigned under the PHA. If the board approves the candidate for hire with WIC, this person is a forward thinking and has done Immunization work and RH work as well as CD work and is showing interest in helping get these programs up and rolling with the PHA .

- PE #40 WIC – The two individuals who worked in the WIC department turned in their resignations in the past month – Since their resignations we have completed the following:

1). WIC Coordinator position (I am happy to say – that an interview was conducted and that candidate is in background right now with Curry County. Pending Board approval

2). MOU with Josephine County - I met with Josephine County WIC Coordinator Christine Shepard. – Josephine County has agreed to help Curry County with the WIC program, see attached MOU for details. Josephine County Board of Commissioners has signed MOU, waiting for Curry Board of Commissioners to approve and sign.

Josephine County WIC Coordinator has advised that she would be willing to help onboard and train the WIC Coordinator (pending board approval) –

- PE#46 Reproductive Health Community Participation & Assurance of Access – was under the WIC Coordinator position and will be handled with WIC Coordinator position at this time (person in background check now). The WIC Coordinator candidate has RH experience and is excited to reach out to providers to assure access to the community. The candidate currently works for a health provider that advised would be willing to help with this.
- PE#50 Environmental Health Safe drinking water program (MOU with Josephine county has been signed and I have been advised that their team will be starting to perform inspections sometime next week. (also interviews were conducted Wednesday and Thursday this last week for EH Coordinator)

Ms. Banks, in less than a month, I have successfully reached out to the state and regional partners in order to help support CCPH so the Curry County Community is able to continue to receive Public Health Services in their own community while we work towards a quick hiring process. Immediate notification went out to HR, Director of Operations and County Commissioners regarding the staffing situation and interviews and hiring process is in the works.

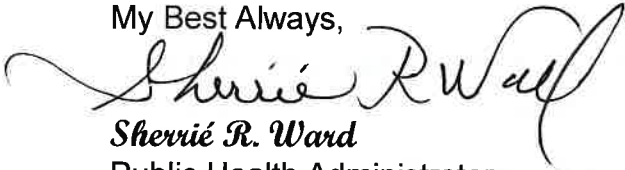
CCPH with the help of Josephine County Public Health has successfully implemented and enter into an MOU with Josephine County for EH services while we find a candidate, to fit the Environmental Health Coordinator Position. The new EH Coordinator will be handing the DWS program, once hired. We have conducted interviews for EH Coordinator position, WIC Coordinator, and Phep Coordinator in the past week. We currently have one individual currently with an offer.

Regarding PE#50 – Assistance has been requested to the state to help out with this until we are able to secure a candidate.

As for R&E Reports, I am providing the R&E reports that were provided to me by Finance. I am attaching them with this letter.

Ms. Banks, I sincerely hope that you all know how devoted I am to the Curry County Community and all I wish for the community is a Public Health System that is able to provide the services that our community deserves.

My Best Always,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sherrié R. Ward". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Sherrié R. Ward

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