

Appendix D: Qualitative Interview Guides

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Education Service District + School District Superintendents

Roles, responsibilities, decision making

1. I would like to start by asking you to state your current role at [insert school system name for superintendents or ESD name] and describe how you were involved in the COVID-19 public health system response.

Overall public health response

Next, I would like you to think about your school district's response across the different stages.

2. As we stated earlier, the goal of this study is to assess Oregon's public health system response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In general, the public health response was focused on reducing the spread of Covid-19. Can you tell us how your school district was involved with the public health response?
3. For each stage, can you walk us through one aspect of the response that your school district performed well and another aspect of the response that did not work as well?
 - a. PROMPT for walking interviewee through each stage and extracting one efficiency and one deficiency.

Funding:

4. What were sources of COVID-19 funding for your school district and how were these funds linked to the public health response in your community?
5. What, if anything, stands out for you about the processes for receiving and distributing COVID-19 specific funding?
 - a. Probes: mechanisms for determining funding and program elements, timelines for making funds available, disbursements, budget/reporting requirements, and flexibility within funding streams
 - b. Probe for what worked well and areas of improvement

Public health response system collaboration and coordination

Now, we are going to discuss collaboration within the public health system response.

6. Please describe how your school district coordinated and collaborated with partners throughout the pandemic, including who your partners were, and what worked well and didn't work well?
 - a. PROBE for partnerships with:
 - i. OHA
 - ii. ODE
 - iii. ESD/School Districts
 - iv. County health department/public health
 - v. CBOs

Emergency management

Now, we would like to explore a little about emergency management coordination within the public health system, including distribution of PPE, where vaccines and testing were provided, and isolation and quarantine guidance.

7. In what ways did state and local emergency response coordinate with your school community related to:
 - a. Personal protective equipment distribution?
 - b. On-site testing? (at individual schools or at a district, central, or regional site)
 - c. Contact tracing?
 - d. Vaccine distribution?
 - e. Public information dissemination?
8. How did your district take into consideration different students' and families' needs with respect to emergency management coordination?
 - a. Were racial/ethnicity, age, income, sexual and gender minorities, people with disabilities, etc. taken into consideration?.
9. What worked well in Covid-19 emergency management coordination with your district?
10. What are some lessons learned for coordination with emergency management?

Enforcement of public health measures

Now we are going to move into a series of questions about enforcement of public health measures to reduce exposure and transmission of COVID-19.

11. During the pandemic there were statewide public health mandates that applied in schools, in general can you tell me about your experience with those statewide mandates?
 - a. What were the greatest challenges your district faced related to implementing or enforcing public health protections?
 - b. Probe for:
 - i. Students
 - ii. Teachers, other staff members
 - c. In the future, what ways could state and local policy making be improved to support adherence to statewide mandates and requirements in schools?
 - d. What are additional measures that could have prevented the spread in your school?
 - e. How could the school and local public health systems better coordinate in a future public health response? How could they better partner? In what ways could state and local communications be improved to increase adherence to statewide mandates and requirements?

Epidemiological data:

The next question is focused on the use of COVID-19 data to inform decision making.

12. How did your district use epidemiological data or databases to support COVID-19 response?
 - a. Probe: What support(s) from outside entities did your district receive for finding, accessing, or using epidemiological data for COVID response in your community?

Wrap up

That is all the prepared questions we have for you.

13. We had challenges getting interviews with other ESDs/superintendents. We understand this is not necessarily a good time to be working with schools. Other

than timing, what recommendations do you have for recruiting superintendents for these interviews?

14. We also hope to survey school leadership; what recommendations do you have for getting surveys returned from superintendents, ESDs, and school principals?

15. Do you have any additional thoughts or recommendations you'd like to share about the public health system response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Health Care Associations

We recognize that the public health system response likely shifted across the span of the COVID-19 pandemic. For the purposes of this interview, we are going to be talking about the COVID-19 pandemic in stages.

< SCREEN SHARE [chronological stages graphic](#), walk through stages. Leave graphic up as screen share during full interview, share pdf in chat if requested by interviewee >

COVID-19 Chronological Stages:

Stage 1 - *March 2020 - November 2020*: outbreak, disease investigation, implementing public health protections (masking, distancing, shutdowns), preparing for vaccination

Stage 2 - *December 2020 - August 2021*: vaccination, disease investigation, enforcing public health protections, and partial reopening

Stage 3 - *September 2021 - February 2022*: vaccinations, reopening and dealing with variants

Stage 4 - *March 2022 - Present June 2022*: total reopening, no public health protections, and changes in investigative guidelines

We will be referencing these stages during our conversation today. When answering a question, you do not need to worry so much about the exact months but rather, use these stages as a general guideline to reference responses in different periods. In addition, when answering questions here today, please only discuss the stages when you were at the [organization name] and working on the pandemic response.

Introductions

1. Let's start with your name(s) and current role or job title(s) in [organization name].

Overall public health response

Today we will focus this interview on the public health response, this means... use our def. Systems level approach involving government, private industry, and non-profit organizations to slow the transmission of COVID-19. Public health responses may also

include activities to address social determinants of health such as housing and food insecurity but for the most part we are focused on slowing the spread of COVID-19.

Roles, responsibilities, decision making

2. In what ways, if any, is your organization *typically* involved in public health emergency response efforts (not including COVID-19)?
3. Can you briefly describe how you were/are involved in the COVID-19 public health system response.
4. For each stage, can you walk me through the areas of focus you were involved in personally?
 - a. PROMPT for walking interviewee through each stage to elicit explanation of their key activities in that stage.
 - b. In what ways did you provide support to your membership to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic during each stage?

Public health response system collaboration and coordination

Now, we are going to discuss collaboration within the public health system response.

5. Please describe how your organization coordinated and collaborated with partners for public health response throughout the pandemic, including who your partners were, and what worked well and didn't work well?
 - a. PROBE for partnerships with:
 - i. Oregon Health Authority
 - ii. Local public health authorities
 - iii. Tribes
 - iv. Office of Emergency Management
 - v. Hospitals/health systems
 - vi. Long-term care facilities
 - vii. Schools
 - viii. CBOS
 - ix. Businesses

Overall response

6. Overall, what was your agency's greatest challenge during responding to the pandemic?
7. Overall, what was your agency's greatest contribution to the pandemic response?
8. From your experience, were there aspects of the pandemic response that were handled well by the Oregon Health Authority?
9. From your experience, were there aspects of the pandemic response that were handled poorly by the Oregon Health Authority?
10. How do you think lessons learned from Oregon's public health system response to COVID-19 can inform future response to public health emergencies?

Wrap up

Those are all the prepared questions we have for you.

11. What, if any, additional thoughts or comments, or recommendations would you like to share about the public health system's response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Labor Unions

Roles, responsibilities, decision making

1. I would like to start by asking you (or both of you) to state your organization and position and describe your organization was involved in the COVID-19 public health system response.

We recognize that the public health system response likely shifted across the span of the COVID-19 pandemic. For the purposes of this interview, we are going to be talking about the COVID-19 pandemic in stages.

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COVID-19 Chronological Stages:

Stage 1 - *March 2020 - November 2020*: outbreak, disease investigation, implementing public health protections (masking, distancing, shutdowns), preparing for vaccination

Stage 2 - *December 2020 - August 2021*: vaccination, disease investigation, enforcing public health protections, and partial reopening

Stage 3 - *September 2021 - February 2022*: vaccinations, reopening and dealing with variants

Stage 4 - *March 2022 - Present June 2022*: total reopening, no public health protections, and changes in investigative guidelines

We will be referencing these stages during our conversation today. When answering a question, you do not need to worry so much about the exact months but rather, use these stages as a general guideline to reference responses in different periods. In addition, when answering questions here today, please only discuss the stages when you were at the [organization name] and working on the pandemic response.

2. Looking at the COVID-19 stages, how has your role changed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic?

Overall public health response

Next, I would like you to think about your organization's response across the different stages.

3. As we stated earlier, the goal of this study is to assess Oregon's public health system response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In general, the public health response was focused on reducing the spread of Covid-19. Can you tell us how your organization was involved with the public health response?
 - a. In what ways did you provide support to your membership to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic?
4. For each stage, can you walk us through one aspect of the response that your organization performed well and another aspect of the response that did not work as well?
 - a. PROMPT for walking interviewee through each stage and extracting one efficiency and one deficiency.

Public health response system collaboration and coordination

Now, we are going to discuss collaboration within the public health system response.

5. Please describe how your organization coordinated and collaborated with partners throughout the pandemic, including who your partners were, and what worked well and didn't work well?
 - a. PROBE for partnerships with:
 - i. OHA
 - ii. ODE
 - iii. Other labor unions
 - iv. OrOHSA
 - v. ESDs
 - vi. School Districts
 - vii. (County health department/public health
 - viii. CBOs

Emergency management

Now, we would like to explore a little about emergency management coordination within the public health system, including distribution of PPE, where vaccines and testing were provided, and isolation and quarantine guidance.

6. In what ways, if any, was your agency involved in the distribution of personal protective equipment?
 - a. Can you describe any barriers or challenges you encountered in operationalizing PPE distribution?
 - b. Can you describe things that went well with PPE distribution?
7. In what ways, if any, was your agency involved in supporting vaccination efforts during stages 2-4?
 - a. What worked well?
 - b. What could be improved?
8. From your perspective, what statewide improvements in emergency management could be made?

Enforcement of public health measures

Now we are going to move into a series of questions about enforcement of public health measures to reduce exposure and transmission of COVID-19.

9. What were the greatest challenges your organization faced related to implementing or enforcing public health protections?
10. What were the greatest challenges your members faced related to implementing or enforcing public health protections?
11. In the future, what ways could state and local policy making be improved to support adherence to statewide mandates and requirements in schools?
12. How could the school and local public health systems better coordinate in a future public health response? How could they better partner? In what ways could state and local communications be improved to increase adherence to statewide mandates and requirements?

Wrap up

Those are all the prepared questions we have for you.

13. Do you have any additional thoughts or recommendations you'd like to share about the public health system response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Tribal Organizations

We recognize that the public health system response likely shifted across the span of the COVID-19 pandemic. For the purposes of this interview, we are going to be talking about the COVID-19 pandemic in stages.

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COVID-19 Chronological Stages:

Stage 1 - *March 2020 - November 2020*: outbreak, disease investigation, implementing public health protections (masking, distancing, shutdowns), preparing for vaccination

Stage 2 - *December 2020 - August 2021*: vaccination, disease investigation, enforcing public health protections, and partial reopening

Stage 3 - *September 2021 - February 2022*: vaccinations, reopening and dealing with variants

Stage 4 - *March 2022 - Present June 2022*: total reopening, no public health protections, and changes in investigative guidelines

We will be referencing these stages during our conversation today. When answering a question, you do not need to worry so much about the exact months but rather, use these stages as a general guideline to reference responses in different periods. In addition, when answering questions here today, please only discuss the stages when you were at the [organization name] and working on the pandemic response.

Roles, responsibilities, decision making

1. Can you please state your current role and describe how you were involved in the COVID-19 public health system response, including how your role changed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - a. PROBE for
 - i. Key responsibilities in addition to job titles
 - ii. Date (or stage) for which they started at their role

Overall public health response

Next, I would like you to think about your organization’s public health response across different stages of the pandemic.

2. As we stated earlier, the goal of this study is to assess Oregon’s public health system response to the COVID-19 pandemic. How would you define “public health system response”?
 - a. Probe: What are key elements of Oregon’s public health system response?
 - b. Can you describe the role of Tribes in Oregon's public health response?
3. For each stage, can you walk us through one aspect of the response that your organization performed well and another aspect of the response that did not work as well?

Funding

Now, we are going to discuss pandemic-specific funding to Oregon Tribes and use of funds.

4. What were sources of COVID-19 funding for the Oregon Tribes and how were these funds linked to the public health response in Tribal Nations?
 - a. Probe for how this funding helped to fill pandemic response gaps
5. What, if anything, stands out for you about the processes for receiving and distributing COVID-19 specific funding?
 - a. Probes: mechanisms for determining funding formulas and program elements, timelines for making funds available, disbursements, budget/reporting requirements, and flexibility within funding streams
 - b. Probe for what worked well and areas of improvement
6. For each stage, can you walk me through the main bodies of work you were involved in personally?
 - a. PROMPT for walking interviewee through each stage to elicit explanation of their key activities in that stage
7. Looking back at each of these stages is there anything that stands out to you as an area DOJ could have handled differently to bring about a better outcome?

8. Looking back at each of these stages is there anything that stands out to you as something that other sectors within the public health system could have handled differently to bring about a better outcome?
9. Are there one or two things you absolutely would do the same?

Emergency management

The next few questions are about emergency management coordination within the public health system, including distribution of PPE, where vaccines and testing were provided, and isolation and quarantine guidance.

10. How did your organization coordinate with Tribal, state, and local emergency response systems relating to:
 - a. Personal protective equipment distribution?
 - b. Vaccine distribution and testing?
 - c. Getting COVID-19 information to the community?
11. How were the needs of Tribal communities taken into consideration for PPE distribution, vaccine distribution and testing, and getting COVID-19 information to Tribes?
12. What statewide improvements in emergency management could be made to better support and prepare Oregon's public health response in Tribal Nations?

Enforcement of public health measures

Now we are going to move into a series of questions about the enforcement of public health requirements in response to COVID-19.

13. How was your organization involved in the enforcement of public health requirements to reduce the transmission of COVID-19?
14. In regards to implementing and enforcing public health protections, what would you say was the biggest success of your organization? Biggest challenge?

Communications and messaging

Next I'd like to turn to the topic of public health communication during the COVID-19 pandemic.

15. In what ways did COVID-19 related communication and messaging work or not work?
- a. Probe for community needs, response gaps, culturally-specific media
 - b. Probe for
 - i. communication about mandates
 - ii. vaccine-specific communication
 - iii. Local requirements

Epidemiological data

The next question is focused on data.

16. How did your organization use epidemiological data or databases to support COVID response?
- a. Probe: How did IHS support Oregon Tribes in accessing or using COVID-19 data?

Public health response system collaboration and coordination

Now, we are going to discuss collaboration within the public health system response.

17. Please describe how your organization coordinated and collaborated with partners throughout the pandemic, including who your partners were, and what worked well and didn't work well?

Overall response

Now, we are going to discuss collaboration within the public health system response.

18. Can you describe one or two public health system response decisions you had to make that were particularly difficult?
19. Overall, what was your organization's greatest challenge during responding to the pandemic?
20. How do you think lessons learned from Oregon's public health system response to COVID-19 can inform future response to public health emergencies at a local level?

Wrap up

Those are all the prepared questions we have for you.

21. Do you have any additional thoughts or recommendations you'd like to share about the public health system's response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

