

All Staff Email from Director Garcia – April 26, 2021

Happy Monday, Team IDPH and DHS!

I'm so thrilled to share with you today an update on our health and human services alignment efforts. Last Thursday, we officially kicked off the effort in full, and I'm already so pleased with the path we're on. I have full faith and confidence in our PCG team to conduct this work the right way—prioritizing transparency, honoring fear of the unknown, and commitment to help us achieve an organizational structure that better serves lowans.

I'm attaching the PowerPoint used in the kickoff meeting, and I want to take this opportunity to share with you some of the great takeaways. In particular, I appreciated the framing of what this alignment assessment is and is not. For example, this opportunity *is* a joint effort between our departments and it *is not* a unilateral takeover. The assessment *is* a transformational effort and *is not* status quo. We know change is coming—recommendations for “the how” and “the what” are the pieces of the puzzle PCG will help identify.

PCG touched on some key themes from the pre-implementation interviews conducted. These one-on-one interviews were held with 16 team members—8 from each agency—and myself, prior to the kickoff. Utmost in everyone's feedback is a common commitment to the health and well-being of lowans and general, mutual respect and presumption of good will. That tells me we're on the right path.

We also know the interviews revealed some concerns: fatigue from the ongoing pandemic response, fear of the unknown, and fear of losing a “prevention/public health” mindset. And, you know what? These are good, healthy responses to an effort such as this one. I encourage y'all to continue providing this feedback, because it matters—to me, to our Executive Teams, and to the PCG team.

We're very close to launching an independent, co-branded website to help keep you and our stakeholders up to date on what's new with this work. Feedback from both y'all and our stakeholders is critical. There will be multiple ways as we get into the thick of the work over the summer for you to engage and we'll share more on that as we get closer.

So, what are our next steps? The PCG team will deliver a couple of key items to us in May and June that form the foundation of this work, including identifying the primary project team and decision making process, and providing a project plan. These deliverables are intended to be public facing, so please know you will have the opportunity to view for yourself.

In the meantime, continue to reflect on the ways we can better serve lowans and keep bringing that energy to this process. As always, I'm extremely proud to serve alongside you.

All my best,

-Kelly