

<p>FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 07/24/2023</p> <p>TO: Grant County Media</p>	<p>FOR INFORMATION CONTACT</p> <p>Lexi Smith Communication Coordinator lsmith@granthealth.org</p> <p>Laina Mitchell Investigations & Response Manager lmitchell@granthealth.org</p>
--	---

Student Epidemic Action Leaders Team to Launch Local Research Initiatives in Collaboration with GCHD



Moses Lake, WA- The Grant County Health District is excited to partner with two University of Washington (UW) master's in public health epidemiology students, (shown in the picture to the left), who are current members of the [Student Epidemic Action Leaders \(SEAL\) Team](#) at the UW. The SEAL Team provides students with experience in applied epidemiology training and field assignments at state and local health departments. Last week, Sarah (left) and Ashley (right) were on-site at the GCHD office to collaborate with staff and initiate a successful launch for their respective projects!

“This is our first SEAL Team to come to Grant County and it is a wonderful opportunity for GCHD to gain deeper insights into areas of public health concerns. Our staff and community partners will be able to use the work of the SEALS to better refine and inform our programs and interventions”, Theresa Adkinson, GCHD Administrator.

Sarah will continue to work closely with GCHD’s Healthy Communities & Families division and specifically, with GCHD’s Harm Reduction Coordinator to create a GIS heat map of non-fatal overdoses in Grant County. In this case, a heat map will illustrate data through various colors to demonstrate areas in Grant County where overdose occurs most frequently. With the use of this data, GCHD staff and community partners can plan for prevention, interventions, and services in specific areas of the county.

Ashley has joined forces with GCHD’s Communicable Disease division to complete a three-part Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) assessment for Grant County. This assessment will focus on the following:

- STI antibiotic accessibility and completion rates through local pharmacies.
- Local healthcare provider’s capacity to treat and test for STIs.
- Analysis of GCHD’s internal STI investigation process and partner notification.

“This program is a great way for us to obtain qualitative and quantitative data by doing a landscape assessment of services and needs in Grant County with the assistance from the MPH Epidemiology students, and we are grateful for their willingness to come on-site to work with us,” says Laina Mitchell, GCHD’s Investigation and Response Manager.

The SEAL program offers a valuable opportunity for aspiring leaders in public health to gain hands-on, real-world experience. Grant County Health District is honored to be a participating Local Health Jurisdiction (LHJ) in this initiative and eagerly awaits the outcomes of Sarah and Ashley's efforts.

###