**LWVSJ Observer Corps\*: Board of Health April 19, 2023**

The North Sound Behavioral Health Organization sent a letter to Governor Inslee laying out the **shortages of mental health services in the region.**

Dr. Fishaut briefed the Council on **fentanyl.**  A third county resident died of an overdose, but in Whatcom county. Fentanyl deaths now equaled Covid deaths in the county. An **education program** took place for the Hispanic community through the JLSFRC. One is coming up for SJI high school and middle school students. The doctor will attend the next Public Hospital District meeting to speak on the issue. EMS is thinking about **positioning Narcan in key places** throughout the community. There is a **growing threat from a horse tranquilizer Xylazine** known as “tranq” **for which there is no antidote**.

The SJI Prevention Coalition briefed the Council on the **Healthy Youth information Survey**. The good news is that most youth in the County do not use drugs and use has been falling. Youth use alcohol and drugs to **self-medicate** when they struggle with mental health issues. **Depression and anxiety are issues for 36-42% of those in grade 8-12.** There is increased suicide risk among youth. **Covid represents a break in trends** and more years of data and more analysis are needed to learn what is happening and why, but the impacted on children is clear as they return to classroom, affecting their teachers. County programs focus on reducing risk factors that can predict drug use and boosting protecting factors that buffer against it. Mentoring programs in the county are using **more group mentoring and peer to peer mentoring** which have **increased participation and retention.**

Ellen Wilcox, Healthy Communities Manager updated the Board on the **contamination of well in Hannah Heights on SJI with PFAS. Experts** from the state **Department of Health** are managing the response to the contamination and the Department of Ecology is handling the investigation. The County Health Department is managing communication and support to the affected households and to those in areas of potential concern. They notified people in the area door -to- door on Tuesday, have been working with the HOA, and are **holding a meeting with those affected on Wednesday** evening which Counselor Minney will attend. The Health Officer provided information resources to local medical practitioners to help those potentially affected understand possible health issues. With the well out of commission, a supply of safe drinking water in the affected area will be a challenge.

\*The **League of Women Voters,** a nonpartisan organization encourages informed participation in government. The Observer Corps attends and takes notes at government meetings to expand public understanding of public policy and decisions. The notes do not necessarily reflect the views of the League or its members.