



Minutes of the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities

February 5, 2009 – Teleconference

Department of Health Town Center 1 Building, 101 Israel Road SE, Tumwater, WA 98501

HDC members present:

Vickie Ybarra, Chair
Emma Medicine White Crow, Vice Chair
Annie Conant
Nancy Fisher
Eric Hurlburt
Danette Ives

MaryAnne Lindeblad
Frankie T. Manning
Diana McMaster
Millie Piazza
Gwendolyn Shepherd
Felicia Waddleton-Willis

HDC members absent:

Ellen Abellera
Winona Hollins Hauge
Diana Lindner

Martin Mueller
Madeleine Thompson

HDC Staff present:

Heather Boe, Communications Consultant
Tamara Fulwyler, Outreach Coordinator
Christy Hoff, Health Policy Analyst

Craig McLaughlin, Executive Director
Desiree Robinson, Executive Assistant

Guests and Other Participants:

Kristina Alnajjar, Washington Health Foundation
Vicki Bradley, Health Point
Secret Charles, Community Coalition for Environmental Justice
Maria Gardipee, Department of Health
Lilia Gomez, Washington Association of Community and Migrant Health Centers

Mystique Hurtado, Governor's Office of Indian Affairs
Katharine Sacks Sanders, Washington Health Foundation
Zeynep Shorter, Department of Health
Don Sloma, Washington Health Foundation
Lorna Stone, Washington Health Foundation
Juliet VanEenwyk, Department of Health

Vickie Ybarra, Council Chair, called the public meeting to order at 1:30pm.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Approve February 5, 2009 agenda

Motion/Second: Lindeblad/Medicine White Crow. Approved unanimously

2. ADOPTION OF DECEMBER 18, 2008 MEETING MINUTES

Motion: Approve December 18, 2008 meeting minutes

Motion/Second: Waddleton-Willis/Conant. Approved unanimously

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COUNCIL BUSINESS

Christy Curwick Hoff, Council Staff, provided an update on the two staff vacancies. She said the Board of Health did not have plans to fill either position permanently; however, they are hiring staff to help with health impact reviews on a temporary on-call basis.

Ms. Hoff provided an overview of several bills, including two that would directly affect the Council. Chair Ybarra asked Craig McLaughlin, Executive Director of the State Board of Health, if the Board would be able to continue the work of the Council if the Council was suspended. Mr. McLaughlin said that Senate Bill 5588 contained language that agencies and commissions would need to find ways to obtain public input without using advisory councils. He said the Board of Health could theoretically continue to support the Council's work if it had the staff resources but would need to assess if it was feasible to do so without convening the Council. He said there was a draft bill out of the Governor's executive policy office that does not affect the Council or the Board.

Council members discussed the budget process, including whether resources to support staff and the work of the various boards and commissions would be eliminated if the boards and commissions themselves were eliminated. Mr. McLaughlin said fiscal notes have been requested for some of the bills. He said instead of having one budget package at the end of this session, there might be budget items that pass throughout the session.

4. UPDATE ON COUNCIL OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Tamara Fulwyler, Council Staff, said outreach through community events has focused on raising awareness of health disparities and sharing information about the Council's work and she listed a number of events that she attended. Through her work, she is able to link community groups to needed resources and information and she provided several examples of these linkages. She has identified several community members who are interested in participating on the Council's advisory committees. She provided information about the Council's work and resources available on its new Web site to 25 foundations that support community-based programs working to promote health equity for communities of color around the state. The minority health communications workgroup will meet on February 23 to review the draft communications directory. She submitted a carryover request for funds from the first year of the grant to support advisory committees in the second year of the grant. Finally, she announced she would be attending the mandatory grantee meeting at the end of February, which would be held in conjunction with the National Leadership Summit in Washington, DC.

5. UPDATE ON ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Ms. Hoff said she is actively recruiting committee members for the health insurance coverage and the healthcare workforce diversity advisory committees. She said she has a good list of potential contacts for the other two committees (education and obesity/diabetes) and she would start contacting them next. She thanked Council members for their suggestions and input. She said she is making special effort to recruit individuals and representatives from community-based organizations representing communities of color. Ms. Hoff said once she has a better sense of the membership, she can work with members to set up a date and time for the first meeting and after that, committees can each set up their own meeting schedules.

MaryAnne Lindeblad, Council Member, said the individuals identified for the health insurance advisory committee made up a solid group of individuals to look at these issues. Chair Ybarra said she is looking forward to seeing the committees begin to work.

6. PUGET SOUND HEALTH ALLIANCE'S COMMUNITY CHECKUP REPORT

Chair Ybarra said as a part of the Council's overall charge to promote communication and collaboration around health disparities, she invited the Puget Sound Health Alliance to share information with the Council about its second Community Checkup report. Chair Ybarra introduced Diane Giese, Director of Communication & Development, for the Puget Sound Health Alliance. Ms. Giese gave her presentation (on file), which provided an introduction to the Alliance, highlighted resources available on the Alliance's Web site, described where the Alliance is headed with health equity and asked for ideas and coordination as they move forward with their health equity work. She offered to assist the Council, recognizing that their goals are closely tied. Ms. Giese provided her contact information on the last page of her presentation materials.

Ms. Secret Charles, a public participant in the meeting, said she would follow-up with Ms. Giese regarding collaboration with the Community Coalition for Environmental Justice and its toxic beauty project.

7. REPORT ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT GAP STUDIES

Chair Ybarra said the 2008 Legislature directed the Commissions on African American Affairs, Asian Pacific American Affairs, and Hispanic Affairs along with the Governor's Office on Indian Affairs and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to conduct studies on the academic achievement gap for students of color. She said the Council has identified education as one of its priorities and it has made an effort to follow this parallel piece of policy work as it could help inform the future work of the Council. She said the research groups completed the studies in December 2008 and today the Council would receive briefings on the key findings and recommendations.

Chair Ybarra introduced each of the speakers and the topic they were presenting (presentations on file). Erin Jones, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, provided a briefing on the academic achievement gap study for African American students. Jason Allen Sievers, Washington State University and Laurie McCubbin, Washington State University, presented findings from the achievement gap study for Native American students. Frances Contreras, University of Washington, presented findings from the study on Hispanic/Latino students. Shirley Hune, University of Washington, presented findings from the studies for Asian and Pacific Islander students. Following each presentation, Chair Ybarra asked for Council members' questions and comments.

Chair Ybarra asked Ms. Jones whether the millennium school model is a recognized best practice or whether the researchers were proposing to create something new. Ms Jones said there are schools similar to the proposed model, but it is something that that the research team is proposing.

Nancy Fisher, Council Member, commented on the findings that math and science WASL scores were lower in rural areas and asked Dr. Sievers and Dr. McCubbin if the finding was true for majority students as well. Dr. McCubbin said she did not have an answer because they tried to focus their analysis on Native American students. Member Fisher added that the finding might be due to the qualifications of the teachers. Member Fisher also commented on the finding that schools with smaller numbers of Native American students tended to do better than schools with larger numbers of Native American students. She speculated whether this might be due to the "self-fulfilling prophecy," i.e., students may feel there are lower expectations placed on them. Emma Medicine White Crow, Council Vice Chair, asked whether rural schools referred to reservation schools. Dr. McCubbin said they could not break out the data by reservation school and emphasized the need for consistent data on Native American students. Vice Chair Medicine White Crow said she has not seen a definitive dropout rate for Native students. Dr. McCubbin said they found a report that

provided dropout rates for Native students by district and they received the data, but then the data quickly became unavailable after 2004. Diana McMaster, Council Member, asked if dropout rates or other data differed by gender. Dr. McCubbin said they found national data for Native American men but not for women, again highlighting the need for more consistent data at both the state and national level.

Member Fisher asked Dr. Contreras if there was research on factors that contribute to student success. Dr. Contreras said that successful students are very resourceful; they learn to navigate school differently and to find the support they need in the community. She added that successful students tend to have a single mentor to provide support. Member McMaster asked if the researchers defined Latino according to acculturation or some generational criteria. Dr. Contreras said the Latino population is largely a first generation community in Washington State. She said they asked the research participants (students and parents) about their generational status but they have not run the analysis by generational status. Ms. Lilia Gomez, a public participant in the meeting, asked for more information on the Dream Act (HB 1079); Dr. Contreras provided a brief overview.

Member McMaster commented on the wide variation that exists under the category “Asian” and asked Dr. Hune what kind of work is being done to raise awareness about this diversity. Dr. Hune agreed that this is a huge problem, particularly because of the class disparities (i.e., many immigrants are being recruited for high-tech jobs while other immigrants are in low-income jobs). Dr. Hune said she was not aware of efforts in the schools to raise awareness and offered to continue to do her part to help. Chair Ybarra said this issue speaks to the lack of cultural competence of the system.

Chair Ybarra thanked the researchers for their presentations and added that she hopes the Council builds on their work as it moves forward with convening its advisory committee on education.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

Secret Charles, Community Coalition for Environmental Justice, provided written comment, which was delivered to all Council members prior to the start of the meeting.

9. DISCUSSION OF COUNCIL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Chair Ybarra said over the past year the Council has received several requests for letters of support from state and local agencies and organizations submitting proposals for grant funding. In addition, the Council has been approached during past legislative sessions by organizations requesting that the Council support proposed health disparities-related legislation. To date, the Council has not had a policy or procedure in place to guide it in determining whether to accept or decline such requests.

Ms. Hoff reviewed the draft policy on providing letters of support. Member McMaster asked if a Council member could excuse itself from a vote if the proposal conflicted with a policy from the member's agency. Chair Ybarra said she would consult with potentially affected Council members to seek their input and advice on how to proceed. Member McMaster said the Council should inform those requesting a letter that it may provide multiple letters of support. Chair Ybarra said she would like more clarity about which criteria must be met. Member Lindeblad recommended staff combine the first and second bulleted points with the word “or” to indicate that one of those criteria must be met and the word “and” could be inserted between the remaining points to indicate that they must all be met.

Motion: *The Council adopts the Policy and Procedure on Providing Letters of Support as submitted and amended on February 5, 2009.*

***Motion/Second:** Lindeblad/Medicine White Crow. Approved unanimously*

Ms. Hoff reviewed the draft policy on communicating with the Legislature. Chair Ybarra directed staff to amend the guidance criteria so the first two bulleted points be combined with the word “or” and the word “and” be inserted before the last bulleted point to indicate that each criteria must be met.

***Motion:** The Council adopts the Policy and Procedure on Communicating with the Legislature as submitted and amended on February 5, 2009.*

***Motion/Second:** Lindeblad/Shepherd. Approved unanimously*

10. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS AND UPDATES

Gwendolyn Shepherd, Council Member, said she appreciated hearing the results of the research reports on the academic achievement gap. She pointed out the common threads among each study. She noted that since the early Council meetings, the issue of language barriers has been repeatedly brought forward. She asked if the current budget issues at the state level would affect the Council. Chair Ybarra said there have been some bills presented in the Legislature that may impact the Council. To date, no final action has been taken on the bills.

Ms. Hoff said the next meeting would be May 14 in Bremerton. Member Shepherd said the meeting would be at the Norm Dicks government building. She will provide additional information closer to the meeting date.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Ybarra adjourned the meeting at 4:23 p.m.

GOVERNOR'S INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HEALTH DISPARITES

Vickie D. Ybarra, R.N., M.P.H., Chair