

**Advisory Committee Members Present:**

Flor Alarcon Avendana  
Nathan Furukawa  
Tutrecia Giles (phone)  
Jonathan Green  
Jenine Grey (phone)

Sonja Hallum  
Diane Klontz, Co-Chair  
Amy Martinez (phone)  
Merritt Mount

**Guests:**

Sinoun Hem, on behalf of Lua Pritchard  
Shannon Harper, on behalf of Marcia Meyers (phone)

**Staff:**

Christy Hoff

**Action Items:**

- Christy will follow up with Shannon Harper to obtain information on the American Community Survey and send out to the group.
- Christy will compile information on community-based activities to address poverty and send out the group.
- Christy will send out meeting minutes and a summary of the potential areas of focus brainstormed in today's meeting and send out to the group.
- All members will review the summary and send additional areas of focus to staff.
- All members will come prepared to the next meeting with three or four priority areas of focus.

**1. Welcome and Introductions:**

- Diane Klontz welcomed the group and introduced herself. She gave a brief background about the Department of Commerce and its programs, particularly those within Community Services and Housing that assist communities in poverty.
- Committee members introduced themselves and provided brief summaries of their background and expertise.
- Diane reviewed the agenda and goals for the day's meeting.

**2. Overview of the Health Disparities Council:**

- Christy Hoff provided background on the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities, its responsibilities, and progress to date.

**3. Discuss Charter and Work Processes:**

- Christy walked advisory committee members through the charter, highlighting committee roles and responsibilities, and guiding principles.
- Diane facilitated a discussion about meeting logistics and work processes. She said the goal is to finish the committee's work in four meetings, with follow-up work via email. Members agreed to attempt to reach consensus in decision-making and to use majority vote if necessary.

#### 4. Poverty in Washington State:

- Committee member, Marcia Meyers from the West Coast Poverty Center, was unable to attend the meeting and share her presentation on poverty data in Washington State. Shannon Harper participated on her behalf and provided a few basic statistics:
  - Poverty rate is 13.4 percent in the state, compared to 15 percent in the U.S.
  - Poverty rates are higher among children, racial/ethnic groups, women, and single-parent families.
  - The poverty rate is 10 percent among non-Hispanic whites, about 26 percent among African Americans and Native Americans/Alaska Natives, and 29 percent among Latinos. There is an approximate two-fold difference between Asians and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders
- Diane said the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) has a comprehensive chartbook of data that is focused on Washington poverty.
- Shannon will send Christy the link to the American Community Survey.

#### 5. Discuss Scope of Work:

- Diane said staff sent out the two articles in advance: Reaching for a Healthier Life and the Social and Economic Determinants of Health chapter from the Health of Washington State. She asked members for comments on the articles.
  - Jonathan Green said poverty has a moral/ethical dimension. He added that in his field, early learning, there is a focus on return on investment and evidence-based practice, but there are also important concerns for real people and families, and stressed the importance of the personal dimension. Merritt Mount concurred that it's an important driver and what this committee needs to focus on.
  - Nathan Furukawa appreciated the focus on the lifespan and how determinants from birth follow you throughout your lifespan. He stressed the need to focus on the underlying cause of health outcomes.
  - Flor Alarcon stressed the importance of data and the need to use it effectively and regularly. She added there is always a story behind the data.
  - Tutrecia Giles referred members to the documentary *Unnatural Causes*. She said it's important to understand how poverty, race/ethnicity, education, and other determinants of health are interconnected. Christy said more information is available at [www.unnaturalcauses.org](http://www.unnaturalcauses.org).
  - Diane talked about how your position on the ladder influences your health and how we all don't have the same opportunities to make healthy choices.
  - Nathan asked how the Health Disparities Council chose to focus on the target population of preconception to three years. Christy said the Council had received briefings and presentations on the lifecourse perspective, and understood how prenatal and early childhood exposures shaped health throughout the lifespan and into future generations.
  - Flor said the discussion of the articles was a good way to get the group on the same page—they served as a good point of reference.
- Diane said poverty is a broad topic and wanted the group to brainstorm potential key areas of focus for the committee.
  - Flor said there is a need to empower communities. Communities need to buy into strategies or they are not a good investment. She gave an example of partnerships

to build community gardens in low-income communities. She also talked about access and how resources might be available, but if communities don't know how to access them or can't access them, they are not useful. Nathan concurred with Flor's comments on access to culturally appropriate services.

- Sinoun Hem talked about the importance of nutrition education programs. She added that such programs also connected families to other poverty-related programs. She said those programs are underfunded and should be continued for families in poverty.
- Sonja Hallum said helping people support themselves is critical to moving out of poverty. She said in some communities there is an aversion to taking out student loans, and this serves as a barrier to accessing secondary education. She said it's important to provide culturally appropriate education on financial and other services to access educational training. She said the K-12 education system needs to focus on literacy, e.g., financial literacy, basic life skills, and soft skills (i.e., basic work skills). She stressed guidance and support is important at the K-12 and postsecondary levels so students can move through the system. She said there are multiple pathways to postsecondary education and this is very important to diverse communities who may not see a four-year degree as attainable. She said we need to support at-risk youth in our communities to help them graduate.
- Diane added the importance of asset development (getting people banked), and housing issues from emergency shelters to long-term affordable housing.
- Nathan suggested a focus on the taxation burden that is placed on poor families. He said Washington is on the top in terms of disproportionate burden placed on people in the bottom quintile compared to those in the top quintile. He added that the U.S. has high rates of child poverty, and that our tax and redistribution system does little to help those in poverty.
- Jonathan said there are many different parts of the poverty picture—it can be addressed in homes, communities, schools, etc. He suggested when creating the updated action plan, we should consider cross-referencing areas of overlap.
- Sonja suggested learning more about other work that might be going on at community-based organizations. Diane mentioned Building Changes, which has been working on poverty in Washington.
- Flor suggested analyzing processes and systems to learn what is working and what is not.
- Amy Martinez said it's important to help those in poverty find work as well as providing the wraparound services and supports so they can remain employed.
- Tutrecia suggested a focus on medical homes and preventive care, food deserts, health navigators, and walkable communities. Sinoun echoed the need to focus on walkable communities.
- Nathan said some of these areas are directly related to poverty and preventing poverty, while others are related to poverty's affect on health. He added the group might want to focus on living wage.

**6. Meeting Summary and Wrap Up:**

- Diane suggested that staff write up the minutes and a summary of the potential areas of focus that the group brainstormed. She asked committee members to review the list and send staff any items that they feel are missing. She asked members to come the next meeting prepared to discuss their top three or four areas of focus and we will continue the process of narrowing the list and choosing a few areas of focus at the next meeting. Jonathan reminded committee members to consider the Council's guidance when selecting their areas of focus.
- Christy said she will follow up with Merritt and others to obtain information and resources on activities in the state to address poverty and send this out to the group.
- The next meeting is July 9, likely in the Tacoma area. Christy will send updated calendar invitations with meeting locations.