



GOVERNOR'S
INTERAGENCY
COUNCIL
ON
HEALTH
DISPARITIES

Community Forum Summary
September 15, 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities (Council) thanks the University of Puget Sound Race and Pedagogy Institute for generously hosting the Council's forum. The Council also wishes to acknowledge and thank those who attended and shared their valuable stories, insights, and suggestions:

Community members in attendance

Lynn Abegglen Community Member	Malissa Adame Pierce County Developmental Disabilities	Lynda Ash Leaders in Women's Health	Hank Balderrama Comprehensive Life Resources	Megan Block Community Member, Student
Eva Bowen Tacoma-Pierce Health Department	Elena Candelario Community Health Advocates	Erin Eaton University of Puget Sound, Student	Robin Evans-Agnew Puget Sound Asthma Coalition	Rosa Franklin Leaders in Women's Health
Gretchen Hansen Foundation for Healthy Generations	Codi Hart Community Health Advocates	Megan John Community Member	Lindsey Lambert University of Puget Sound, Student	Patty McDonald Department of Social and Health Services
Caitlin Mitchell University of Puget Sound, Student	Gabe Moaalli Tacoma-Pierce Health Department	Dr. Matthew W. Moore Healthcare Representative	Brianna Murphy University of Puget Sound, Student	Alyssa Ode University of Puget Sound, Student
Lydia Ortiz Community Health Advocates	Suzanne Pak Korean Women's Association	Julie Peterson Foundation for Healthy Generations	Elena Safariants Department of Social and Health Services	Liesl Santkuyl Cross Cultural Collaborative, Leaders in Women's Health
Julie Schaefer Community Member	Julia Shure University of Puget Sound, Student	Kathy Simmons Korean Women's Association	Lucas Smiraldo Office of Equity and Human Rights	Marge Tully Tacoma-Pierce Health Department
Aaron VanValkenburg Pierce County Aging and Disability Resources	Carolyn Weisz University of Puget Sound Race and Pedagogy	Kirsten Wilbur University of Puget Sound	Johanna Wolf Leaders in Women's Health	

Council members in attendance

Emma Medicine White Crow Council Chair, Governor's Designee	Frankie Manning Council Vice Chair, Consumer Representative	Marietta Bobba Department of Social and Health Services	Gail Brandt Department of Health	Nora Coronado Commission on Hispanic Affairs
Vazaskia Crockrell Health Care Authority	Mona Johnson Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction	Diane Klontz Department of Commerce	Stephen Kutz State Board of Health	Paj Nandi Department of Health
Millie Piazza WA Department of Ecology	Lori Lee Wada Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs	Greg Williamson Department of Early Learning		



**Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities
Community Forum // Tacoma, Washington // September 15, 2016**

INTRODUCTION

The Council held its September 15, 2016 public meeting in Tacoma, Washington at the University of Puget Sound. Following its meeting, it convened a public forum in order to raise awareness of the Council, report back to the community on its work, and to seek input to guide future activities.

WELCOMING REMARKS

Emma Medicine White Crow, Council Chair, welcomed forum participants and thanked them for attending. She acknowledged and thanked the Race and Pedagogy Institute at the University of Puget Sound for hosting the Council.

About 50 people were in attendance, including forum participants, Council members, and staff. Participants represented a broad range of sectors, including public health, healthcare, education, and academia. Several participants also introduced themselves as community members and students.

Former Senator Rosa Franklin also welcomed those in attendance. Senator Franklin, from the 29th district in Tacoma, sponsored the legislation in 2006 that created the Council. Senator Franklin discussed the Council's unique role in working across all sectors of state government to address the social, economic, and environmental factors that influence health.

COUNCIL'S 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Christy Hoff, Council staff, provided an overview of the Council and its work to those in attendance—many of whom were not very familiar with the Council. She shared that the Council was celebrating its 10th year and how it wanted to use its anniversary as an opportunity to report back to the community.

Ms. Hoff shared the Council's primary responsibility to work toward the elimination of health disparities by race/ethnicity and gender and its broad focus on the social factors that influence health. She highlighted the Council's past grant awards, which enabled them to support full-time, community outreach staff and how they've had to become more creative with their community engagement activities. She provided information on the Council's work to promote the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services and to encourage state agencies to strengthen language assistance services.

Ms. Hoff provided information on past Council priorities and how it convenes advisory committees with diverse community representation to assist with developing policy recommendations. She provided information on the Council's collaboration with the State Board of Health to conduct Health Impact Reviews, which are objective analyses of legislative or budgetary proposals to determine if there are likely impacts on health and equity. She said the Council's current focus is on promoting equity in state government programs and policies.



COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

Chair Medicine White Crow and Vazaskia Crockrell, Council member representing the Health Care Authority, facilitated a discussion with forum participants.

The following is a summary of topics discussed and comments provided by attendees.

I) What can we do to make sure state government services are fair and equitable?

- Include marginalized and disenfranchised community members in the Council's work.
- Promote equity in state contracting.
- Increase diversity in mid-level and upper management positions by providing mentorship programs for diverse staff.
- Increase focus on refugee and immigrant health.
- Work to legitimize community health workers as a profession so they can get reimbursement.
- Address barriers for people with disabilities (e.g., employment and voting).
- Write a letter of support promoting passage of funding for mental health services through sales tax increase.
- Engage in discussions about race.
- Address racism in housing and homelessness.
- Use an equity lens.
- Engage communities affected by disparities; pay them for their expertise.
- Address issues of trust—many people do not trust government.
- Address the housing crisis. People cannot afford rent.
- Share information with the public about the budget.

- Increase diversity of the state workforce. This can be done by removing names from applications and sharing job announcements more broadly. Increase opportunities for internships and mentorship programs. Make cultural humility more meaningful in the hiring process. Consider asking applicants to write an essay on diversity and be sure to value lived experience.
- Find ways to be accountable to the community. Create community committees or boards.
- Change the way government works so it is more connected to community. Work with local partners.
- Create a system that can adapt to the rapidly changing diversity in the state. The system needs to be flexible.
- Ensure that government reflects the community. Do not require degrees when they are not necessary.
- Reduce barriers for small community based organizations applying for state funding. Paperwork and funding requirements can be a barrier. Provide more education to help these organizations compete.
- Work with community groups to get more grassroots community member participation in forums.

II) How can we better collect, use, or share data to reduce disparities and promote equity?

- Create community committees to provide guidance on data review and dissemination.
- Be sure to share the results of studies with the community.
- Don't use the word surveillance.
- Rely on more qualitative data.

III) What are health concerns in the community? What should the Council focus on in the future?

- Immigrants have lower rates of employment. Processes for recruiting and hiring don't work well for immigrant communities.
- Focus on equitable access in the healthcare system.
- Address inequities in procurement and contracting – RFP processes don't work for smaller businesses and minority-owned businesses.
- Create a living wage for state employees so they can continue to serve communities in need.
- Address educational outcomes for refugee and immigrant populations.
- The state budget is stretched and current programs that are vital to our communities are vulnerable. We need to protect those programs in the budget.
- We need to rededicate ourselves to give a human face to homelessness.



SUMMARY

There were several themes repeated throughout the community discussion:

- Community members stressed the need for meaningful community engagement in state government decision-making, and provided suggestions to create community boards, strengthen relationships with local organizations, and pay community members for their expertise.
- Many in attendance also emphasized the need to address the housing crisis and homelessness, and to acknowledge how racism has shaped these issues.
- Another theme brought up repeatedly was workforce diversity and particularly the need for more diversity in mid-level and upper management positions. Practical suggestions for increasing diversity included creating mentorship programs for diverse staff, removing names from applications to limit bias, sharing job announcements more broadly, incorporating cultural humility into the hiring process, and not requiring advanced degrees when they are not necessary.





striving to eliminate health disparities
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washington state