



Re-envisioning our Future

Process for Recommending Updates to Council Statute

September 15, 2022

The Health Disparities Council is recommending updates to its statute to incorporate 17 years of work and learning addressing health disparities in Washington State.

In 2006, Senator Rosa Franklin, the first African American woman elected to the Washington State Senate (1993), championed a bill intended to eliminate health disparities among people of color and women in Washington State.

The bill created the Governor's Inter-agency Council on Health Disparities.

The Council is charged with developing a state policy action plan to eliminate health disparities among people of color and women.

The Council promotes and facilitates collaboration among state government, the private sector, the public sector, and communities of color.

The Council recommends actions state government can take to help eliminate health disparities. All state agencies must cooperate with the Council's efforts.

The Council released the first State Action Plan in 2010 and has updated it every 1-2 years since.

Notable actions recommended include:

- Adopt standards for culturally and linguistically appropriate services (national CLAS standards).
- Diversify the healthcare workforce, make services geographically accessible, and improve language access throughout government.
- Create and fund a WA State Office of Equity.
- Implement the Environment Justice Task Force's recommendations, including creation of a permanent EJ workgroup to improve accountability to communities.

The Council has come to recognize that eliminating health disparities among people of color and women is not possible as long as racism is present.

Racism is a public health crisis. This means racism is a threat to the health and safety of every single Washingtonian. We need solutions that are at-scale with the crises we are facing.

Confronting racism requires increased investments, authentic community engagement, and pro-equity anti-racist policy action.

The Health Disparities Council is recommending updates to its statute to incorporate 17 years of work and learning addressing health disparities in Washington State.

We will rely on our vision and operating principles to help guide the process.

Council Vision

Guided by our North Star that is Equity, we honor the broad differences and bonding similarities that make up this state.

The power entrusted to us by the people inspires us to be channels for change. We shift power by sharing priorities, being transparent and reflective and disrupting oppressive practices so everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

We intentionally act to heal wounds and cultivate trust; instilling equity into every level of government and beyond, assuring true democracy's light shines on all communities.

Council Operating Principles

Embrace equity

Focus on racism

Prioritize social determinants of health

Center community

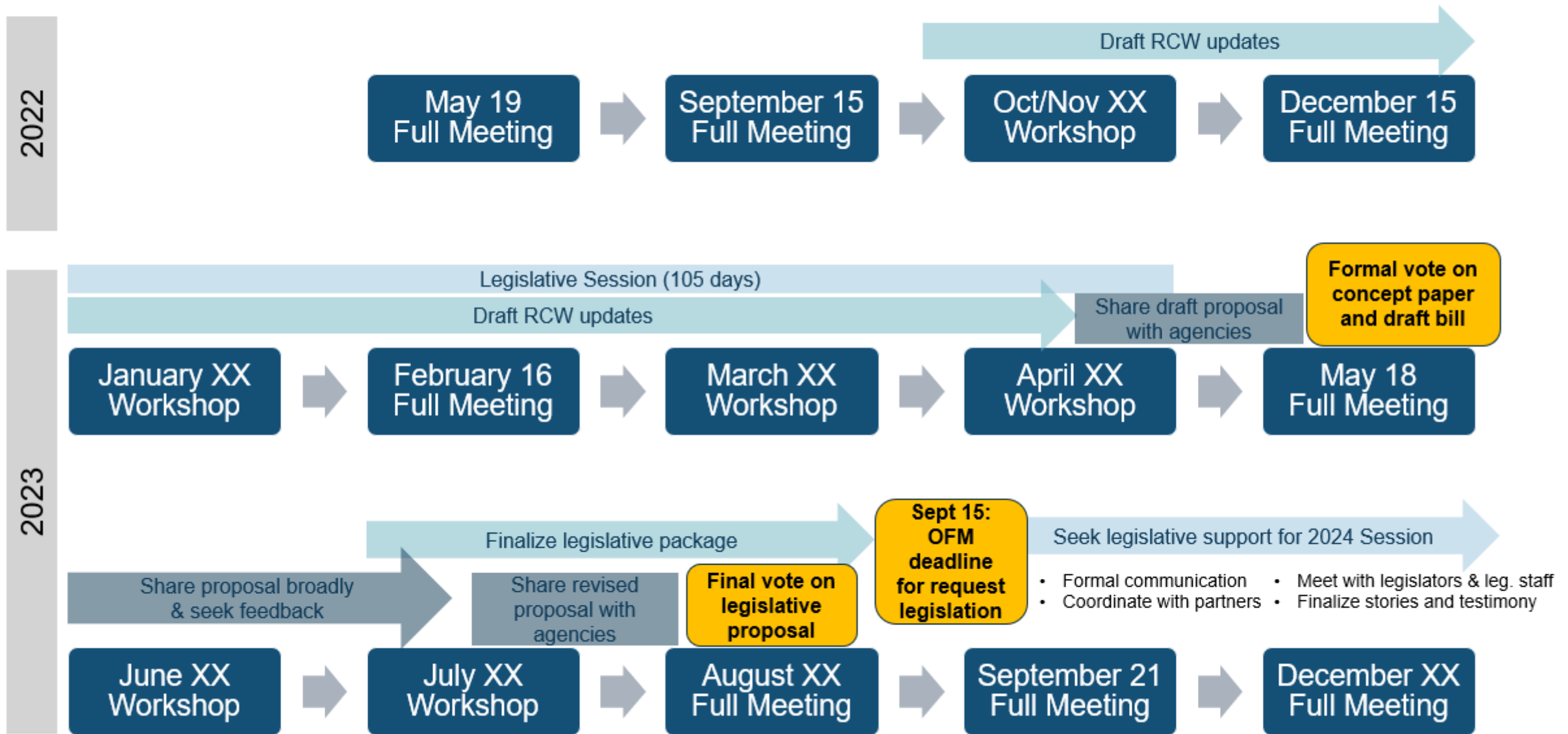
Commit to bold action

Be vigilant for unintended consequences

Process for recommending updates to our statute

- The Council adopted a motion to start this work (Sept 2021).
- This work remains a priority.
- We will:
 - Collectively focus on this effort through meetings and workshops.
 - Work with key partners to consider how the Council can lead or support unified goals.
 - Review current laws that govern the Council's authority (RCW 43.20.270-285, etc.) and recommend specific updates.
 - Develop and advance a legislative proposal that seeks to change relevant laws.

Timeline for Legislative Proposal



Exact dates are tentative.

What we need from Council members

- Actively participate in this collective effort
- Apply the Council's vision and operating principles
- Lead the formation of the proposal
- Engage agency executive leadership
- Coordinate with agency policy and legislative teams
- Develop and deliver communications to advance the proposal
- If proposal is adopted, help implement the changes



To request this document in an alternate format, please contact Kelie Kahler,
Washington State Board of Health Communication Manager, at 360-236-4102,
or by email at kelie.kahler@sboh.wa.gov
TTY users can dial 711