Recap: 11/10/22 Health Disparities Council Redesign Workshop

Redesign Goal: The Health Disparities Council will recommend updates to our authorizing statute to incorporate 17 years of work and learning addressing health disparities in Washington State.

November 10 Workshop Objectives

- Begin our series of monthly workshops and welcome partners.
- Create a shared understanding of the Council's current authorizing statute, as well as the redesign purpose and process.

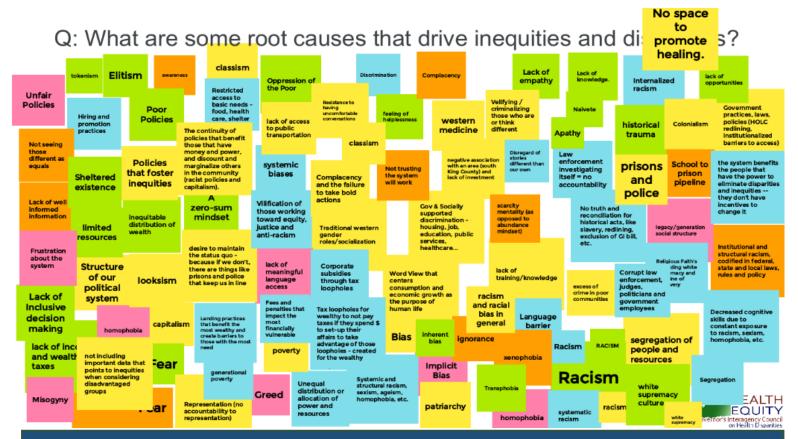
Participants

- 10 Council members/alternate members
- 17 public participants

Public participants were affiliated with the Environmental Justice Council, the Chinese Information and Service Center, the WA State Coalition for Language Access, health and law advocacy groups, workforce training groups, among others.

Participants shared the following reasons for participating in the statute redesign process:

- Build towards a better world
- Be bold and create statewide impact
- Advocate for environmental, language, and food justice
- Create systems that design community care
- Rebuild systems so they advance anti-racism, wellbeing, healing, access, and equity
- Eliminate root causes of health disparities
- Maximize wholeness and minimize harm
- Translate vision into effective laws and policies
- Create alignment across equity initiatives
- Help build more resilient communities
- Rebuild a stronger society post-COVID



Question: What are some root causes that drive inequities and disparities?

Participants discussed how the Council's statute would benefit from a broader scope that acknowledges root causes of disparities and inequities. Some said the redesign process challenges us to articulate the alternative to health disparities and inequities—in the form of what we *do* want and our vision for a just world.

"This is a good, honest current state that needs to be reflected in our statute. This gets to a level of honesty that we don't see in a lot of statutes." – Jessica Zinda, Redesign Co-Lead

Get at root causes and begin the process of undoing harms. The redesigned statute should uphold the Council's vision statement and operating principles.

Key Discussion Points

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• The Council's authority and ability to influence policy is important. Consider our relationship with the Governor's Office, the Office of Equity, the Environmental Justice Council, and the other partners in the ecosystem.

We need to articulate both what we want and what we don't want. What does the world we want look like?

• Many of the root causes of inequities have been in place for hundreds of years. Where is the right place to put our lever to drive things forward?

The Council was transformational at the time of its creation. The proposal we put forward now can be even more transformational.

What is the highest conceivable standard for health and wellbeing? This vision/standard can guide other efforts, such as Healthy

Environment for All (HEAL) Act implementation, agency Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) plans, Health Impact Reviews, etc.

• How do we balance the need to center community voice while being mindful of community fatigue?

We need to be intentional in using an anti-racist lens and inclusive language in the statute.



Question: What are the Council's strengths?

Participants saw many of the same strengths, including interagency cooperation, a clear vision and operating principles, inclusion of community voice and diverse experiences, and a focus on health equity. Some said the ability to discuss equity and justice in terms of health is a unifying strength.

"Working in solidarity so everyone has meaningful opportunity to achieve their full potential."

– Public participant



Question: What challenges or limitations have we encountered?

Some participants noticed the statute is focused on specific diseases and conditions, rather than systemic issues. Participants discussed how the language of the statute shapes the Council's work, and there is a need to focus upstream on root causes and prevention.

Next Steps

Our goal is to prepare a legislative proposal for the 2024 legislative session, which requires us to have a final proposal ready by September 2023.

The Council will focus on redesign efforts through a series of workshops and regular quarterly meetings in 2023. Upcoming meetings:

- Thursday, December 15, 2022
- January 2023 (exact date TBD)
- Thursday, February 16, 2023

We will share meeting agendas and other materials on the Health Disparities Council's website and through our distribution list.

"We don't have many chances to redesign or reimagine like this. We should commit to the joy in this. This is a privilege to dream and imagine..." - Benjamin Danielson, Council Chair

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