



**Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities**  
**November 10, 2022 Redesign Workshop – Meeting Notes**  
Virtual ZOOM Platform

**Council members present:**

Benjamin Danielson	Nicole Johnson	Naisha Williams
Michelle Davis (Alternate)	Millie Piazza	Jessica Zinda
Renee Fullerton	Victor Rodriguez	
DoQuyen Huynh	Rian Sallee (Alternate)	

**Council members absent:**

Lydia Faitalia	Diane Klontz	Elizabeth Perez (Alternate)
Willie Frank	Stephen Kutz	Greg Williamson
Sara Franklin-Phillips	Kelly McLain (Alternate)	Leah Wainman
Jessica Hernandez	Lena Nachand (Alternate)	JanMarie Ward (Alternate)

**Council staff present:**

Miranda Calmjoy, Policy Analyst	Jo-Ann Huynh, Administrative Assistant
Grace Cohen, Council Fellow	LinhPhụng Huỳnh, Council Manager
Lindsay Herendeen, Policy Analyst	Cait Lang-Perez, Policy Analyst
Melanie Hisaw, Executive Assistant	

**Guests and other participants**

Ashley Bell	Dan Ferguson
Boliver Choi	Lee Che Leong
Hawa Elias	Rowena Pineda
Maria Fergus	Joana Ramos

During the virtual meeting, approximately 14 members of the public joined. The Council thanks all those who took time to join and share their personal experiences and perspectives during the meeting.

LinhPhung Huỳnh, Council Manager, began the workshop at 12:30 p.m.

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Ben Danielson, Council Chair, said he is grateful to be joining in this workshop and that he is excited for the group to take bold action. He shared his hope that the Council can continue to follow its North Star of equity and anti-racism. He invited each person to introduce themselves and share their “why” for doing this work.

Staff supporting the Council introduced themselves first. Miranda Calmjoy shared that they are here to help collaborate and create systems that design community care.

Lindsay Herendeen shared that she is here to think of how the statute redesign can help staff better support the Council's work, as well as uphold and maintain Health Impact Review work. Cait Lang-Perez shared that she loves this Council because there is value and strength in community. She believes the Council can do more together than individually to create anti-racist change. Grace Cohen shared that their background in direct service motivates them to create systems change. Melanie Hisaw said she is learning from voices in the room and supports the Council's work in breaking down systemic barriers. Jo-Ann Huynh shared that issues of health equity have been important in both her personal and professional life.

Victor Rodriguez, Council Vice Chair and Redesign Co-Lead, said he is motivated to do this work because he believes another world is possible and necessary, and he is inspired to be working with individuals with similar beliefs. He said his role is to help guide the Council in the redesign process along with Member Jessica Zinda and to be accountable. He shared his excitement to facilitate a process that is inclusive and bold. Jessica Zinda, Council Member (Department of Social and Health Services) and Redesign Co-Lead, said she is interested in bold action, possibility, and vision. She said re-opening a statute is an amazing opportunity to do that. She wants to rebuild systems so they advance anti-racism, wellbeing, healing, access, and equity, and this is the place to do that.

Millie Piazza, Council Member (Department of Ecology), shared her passion for environmental justice. She believes this work is her responsibility—to maximize wholeness and minimize harm, and to leave things better than how she found them. Rian Sallee, Council Member (Ecology), said she feels aligned with many folks on the Council and is excited to talk about a collective vision. Nicole Johnson, Council Member (Department of Agriculture), said that as a new member, the redesign process is a great opportunity to learn more about the Council and think about her role within it. As her agency's Equity Policy Advisor, she works to implement both the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act and the Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) Plan and wishes to align various projects under unified goals.

Naisha Williams, Council Member (Department of Health), said her "why" is because the time is now to be transformative in reimagining how the Council works with community and helps build more resilient communities. She spoke about her dislike of the phrase "return to normal" in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and questioned, "Normal for who?" She said the pandemic changed so many things in society and we can't go back; we should only rebuild things stronger.

Renee Fullerton, Council Member (Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board), shared that she been in state government for ten years and is excited to translate a vision into well-written, effective laws. DoQuyen Huynh, Council Member (Health Care Authority), shared she is excited to collaborate with various agencies and partners represented in the Council's space. Michelle Davis, Council Member (State Board of Health) said there is so much work to be done in our state and she sees the Council as a place where that work can happen. She shared she is approaching this work from her 30-year background in policy development and wishes to do it well, be upfront, and engage communities.

Public participants also shared their “why” for engaging with the Council and doing work centered on equity and anti-racism. Dan Ferguson spoke about their work with community and technical colleges, particularly in health workforce training programs, as well as involvement with regional Accountable Communities of Health through the Health Care Authority. Maria Fergus, Community Engagement Specialist for Kitsap Community Health District, said the Health District passed a resolution declaring *racism is a public health crisis*, which created an equity program for the district. Maria looks forward to being bold and creating change.

Joanna Ramos said the Washington State Coalition for Language Access (WASCLA) has partnered with the Council for many years on addressing barriers to language access. WASCLA is interested in the Council’s next steps and making sure equity and language justice are at the center. Boliver Choi, with the Chinese Information Service Center, said they served on some Council advisory groups and is excited to reconnect with the Council. Boliver shared that Asian communities experience many problems when trying to access healthcare and they wish to contribute to proactive solutions.

Ashley Bell shared their interest in developing health equity through policy. Rowena Pineda, staff with the Environmental Justice Council, said her “why” is around environmental justice: she wants to consider the impacts of policy beyond state and national borders, especially in the realms of environmental and climate justice.

Lee Che Leong, spoke about their work with Northwest Health Law Advocates and the Health Equity for Immigrants campaign. These issues are important to Lee Che, the daughter of working class immigrants and a visible minority who grew up on Dena’ina land. They said health equity is more than individuals beating unfair odds—it is working in solidarity to change the odds. Hawa Elias, with the Community Health Plan of Washington, said it is important for everyone to be in the same space because health equity work is often siloed. They are joining this space to collaborate and advocate for accessibility.

Linh said the Council’s redesign project allows us to review and recommend updates to the laws that govern the Council’s operation (RCW 43.20.275 – 285). Attendees reviewed the general process and timeline for developing a legislative proposal as well as key areas of statute to focus on (presentation on file). Linh said the Council’s goal is to develop a proposal for the 2024 Legislative Session that incorporates recommended updates. The Council will engage partners and complete a draft proposal in Spring 2023, and submit a final proposal to the Office of Financial Management in late Summer 2023.

## **2. Council Power & Impact**

Staff provided an overview of the Council’s current statute and past recommendation topics (document on file). The group discussed the Council’s operating principles and vision statement (on file). Chair Danielson shared that these documents contain powerful words, crafted by council members, that hold us to an internal challenge and commitment to action. The inspiration in that can point us to the future. A participant shared they are particularly excited about the principle of “commit to bold action”.

The group participated in an interactive brainstorming activity by using sticky notes to share thoughts on the following questions:

- What are some root causes that drive inequities and disparities?
- What are the Council's strengths?
- What Challenges or limitations have we encountered?

The Council took a break at 1:50 p.m. and reconvened at 2:10 p.m.

### **3. Review Statute**

Participants viewed the idea board and discussed themes and insights to apply to the redesign. Below are some highlights.

*What are some root causes that drive inequities and disparities?*

- “Return to normal” is a myth, because we have experienced rifts and moments of rupture (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic, George Floyd’s murder) that do not allow us to return to “normal.”
- It is powerful for a governmental organization to be honest and state the drivers of inequity (e.g., colonialism, racism, prisons and police). The idea board captures a good, honest current state that needs to be reflected in our statute.
- Many of these aspects and drivers of inequity have been in place for hundreds of years. We should think about: where is the right place to put our lever to drive things forward given where we sit in government?

*What are some of the Council's strengths?*

- Health is our priority. Health can be a unifying topic since it impacts and resonates with everyone. Talking about equity, racial justice, and gender justice in terms of health is a strength.
- The Council strives to center community voice.

*What challenges or limitations have we encountered?*

- Language in the statute is very focused on downstream individual health conditions and specific diseases, rather than systemic issues and root causes.
- The idea board highlights how narrow our current statute is for what we want to achieve. Our statute was bold and transformational when it was created; we should be bold and transformational with the redesign.
- To be responsible stewards, we need more space to name inequities and make bold recommendations, even if others do not agree with the recommendations.

*What do we need to change and work towards?*

- Articulate both what we want and what we don’t want.
- Focus on prevention and upstream factors.

- Hold space to promote healing.
- Serve as a “conduit of vision for the state.” What is our vision of a healthy Washington and what are the highest conceivable standards? How can we paint that picture in partnership with all of community, so agencies and government use that vision to check their work? How could that vision guide assessments like Health Impact Reviews, Environmental Justice Assessments, etc.?
- Incorporate gender inclusive and anti-racist language in the statute.
- Move toward shared power and relational partnering. People who are most impacted by issues need to be at the table to shape policies. This involvement must be rooted in a strong foundation of community engagement, a deep democracy, and meaningful opportunity to participate in policymaking. Remove barriers to participation.
- Fully operationalize and provide adequate resources for community engagement. Engaging folks with lived experience should be ongoing, iterative, and not one-time.
- Consider how to structure the membership of this group. Look at other models, including the Poverty Reduction Workgroup, which has a steering committee of 22 people with lived experience.
- Balance the need to center community voice with being mindful of community fatigue. Consider how we can best serve as a convener and connector across agencies in a way that is not duplicative or harmful.

#### 4. Next Steps

Linh asked what the Council wishes to keep at the forefront as they continue in the redesign. Council Chair Danielson replied that it is a privilege to dream and imagine, so he hopes we can commit to keeping this process joyful. The group committed to bringing joy to the redesign work.

The group worked together to narrow down dates for a workshop in January 2023. Staff announced that the next Council meeting will be on December 15, 2022, and that the January 2023 workshop date will be announced soon.

Council Member and Redesign Co-Lead Zinda said this was a great first meeting and encouraged members to continue thinking about the visions discussed today. Council Vice Chair and Redesign Co-Lead Rodriguez shared gratitude for everyone’s participation and encouraged them to share the questions we discussed today with their own organizations.

## ADJOURNMENT

Victor Rodriguez, Council Vice Chair and Redesign Co-Lead, adjourned the meeting at 3:25 p.m.

## GOVERNOR'S INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HEALTH DISPARITIES

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Benjamin Danielson, Chair

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

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