



Final Minutes of the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities
December 15, 2022
Virtual ZOOM Platform

Council members present:

Sara Franklin-Phillips	Diane Klontz	Rian Sallee (Alternate)
Renee Fullerton	Elizabeth Perez (Alternate)	Jessica Zinda
DoQuyen Huynh	Victor Rodriguez	
Nicole Johnson	Greg Williamson	

Council members absent:

Benjamin Danielson	Jessica Hernandez	Millie Piazza
Michelle Davis (Alternate)	Stephen Kutz	Leah Wainman
Lydia Faitalia	Kelly McLain (Alternate)	JanMarie Ward (Alternate)
Willie Frank	Lena Nachand (Alternate)	Naisha Williams

Council staff present:

Grace Cohen, Council Fellow	LinhPhụng Huỳnh, Council Manager
Melanie Hisaw, Executive Assistant	Lauren King, Task Force Policy Analyst
Jo-Ann Huynh, Administrative Assistant	

Guests and other participants

Fathiya Abdi	Jeff Ketchel
Michael Arnow	Chi Koumbassa
Devyn Bell	

During the virtual meeting, approximately 10 members of the public joined. The Council thanks all those who took time to join, listen in, and share their personal experiences and perspectives during the meeting.

Victor Rodriguez, Council Vice Chair, called the public meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and read from a prepared statement (on file).

Vice Chair Rodriguez recalled Benjamin Danielson's (Council Chair) encouragement to bring joy into our work and the Council redesign process. Vice Chair Rodriguez asked Council members and public participants to introduce themselves and to share something that brings them joy. He said, "Our vision for change, our vision for Washington, our vision for health equity should be rooted in joy because ultimately, that's a critical indicator of a good quality of life—is that we can experience joy in meaningful ways."

Vice Chair Rodriguez introduced himself and identified himself as a Chicano of Indigenous descent. He stated that being in nature with his kids brings him joy. Jessica Zinda, Council

Member (Department of Social and Health Services), reflected on joy being a process and journey. She said nature and being in a state of wonder and awe brings her joy, as well as waffles.

Greg Williamson, Council Member (Department of Children, Youth, and Families), stated that kayaks and guitars bring him joy. He finds joy in talking about change and a future that tends towards justice. He stated that challenging each other expresses love. Renee Fullerton, Council Member (Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board), shared an ornament from the 150-year anniversary of Yellowstone National Park she got during a recent trip and shared the joy both in the experience and in the memory.

Diane Klontz, Council Member (Department of Commerce), shared that seeing people do kind things for others brings her joy. Being part of this group, that's centered on community, is a joyful experience. Sara Franklin, Council Member (Commission on African American Affairs), shared that her biggest joy is her 2-year-old granddaughter and looking at her and knowing the world will be a better place for her.

Nicole Johnson, Council Member (Department of Agriculture), said she finds joy in spending time with friends and family and watching her son transition from youth into a young man/college student. Rian Sallee, Council Member (Department of Agriculture), showed the group a rock she found with her grandma, who passed a few years ago. Holding that rock brings her peace and joy.

Quyen Huynh, Council Member (Health Care Authority), introduced herself as a Vietnamese/American refugee. She shared that she finds joy cooking with her family, learning new recipes with her kids, and finding humor when new recipes go astray. Chi Koumbassa introduced herself as a community member who wears many hats in diversity, equity, and inclusion in community spaces. Dancing, family, and advancing the work of equity, inclusion and anti-racism in community brings her joy. Devyn Bell introduced herself as the Health Equity Manager for the Spokane Regional Health District. She finds joy in baking and sharing baked goods with friends and family.

Jeff Ketchel, WA Public Health Association, said he finds joy in his kids and experiencing the holidays with them. Michael Arnow introduced himself as a community member and shared that he recently produced a DVD on preventive health and is interested in what he can learn from the Council about the topic. He finds joy in outdoor activities, family, dancing with his wife, and getting together with children and grandchildren.

Fathiya Abdi, Community Health Network, shared that she finds joy in her 1-year-old niece and seeing her grow. LinhPhung Huynh, Council Manager, shared that she is a Vietnamese American refugee whose family settled in the US in the early 1990s. One thing that brings her joy is melogold grapefruit, which tastes like sunshine and always makes her day brighter.

Grace Cohen, Council staff, shared that they find joy in hockey. Melanie Hisaw, Council staff, said she's currently finding joy in her Christmas lights. Jo-Ann Huynh, Council staff said she is a Vietnamese immigrant and finds joy in cooking.

Vice Chair Rodriguez reflected on the importance of learning about each other in this fast-moving culture, and taking time to slow down and talk about the things that actually matter: family, relationships, earth connection, food, dancing. He asked: As we do equity work and think about redesign, how can we bring to the forefront things that actually matter and promote joy?

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Approve December 15, 2022 agenda

Motion/Second: Klontz/Sallee. Approved unanimously as amended by Vice Chair Rodriguez—motion to move Item 8 (2023 Council Meeting Schedule) earlier on the agenda.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Approve September 15, 2022 minutes

Motion/Second: Klontz/Sallee. Approved unanimously.

8. 2023 MEETING SCHEDULE

Note: This agenda item was moved to an earlier time. See item #1 – Approval of Agenda (above).

Staff Member Huynh shared the proposed 2023 schedule for regular meetings. She said dates for workshops, community forums, and other events are not included in this list of regular meetings.

Council Members discussed the proposed schedule and participated in polls to select dates. The Council approved the following 2023 regular meeting schedule:

- Thursday, February 16
- Tuesday, May 23
- Thursday, August 17
- Wednesday, September 13
- Thursday December 14

Motion: Approve the 2023 regular meeting schedule with the date selections made at today's meeting.

Motion/Second: Franklin/Williamson. Approved unanimously.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COUNCIL BUSINESS

LinhPhung Huynh, Council Manager, reported on updates and Council business:

- The Council determined in May 2022 to keep meetings virtual as long as a state-level or national-level emergency declaration remains in place. The Washington state of emergency ended in Fall 2022 and staff are monitoring the federal emergency declaration.
- The first Council redesign workshop was held on November 10, 2022.
- The State Board of Health's 2022 State of Health Report includes several linkages to past Council recommendations, including: the need for more complete disaggregated data; removing barriers to health care insurance

coverage; and improving access to culturally and linguistically appropriate health services.

- This winter, a coalition of community partners plans to present a draft resolution on Racism is a Public Health Crisis to the Governor for action. This connects with the Council's redesign, as members have expressed the importance of using anti-racist language in the Council's statute.

Staff member Huynh recapped the first Governor's Equity Summit, hosted by the Office of Equity, which focused on Washington becoming a state of belonging. She invited participants to share their thoughts on the Summit.

Council Member Zinda reflected on John A. Powell's opening remarks and how to foster belonging through policy. She considered the importance of interconnection, and how dehumanization can occur when people do not live like we are connected to each other.

Council Member Huynh shared that becoming a state of belonging feels like a gargantuan task and that breaking this down into smaller, more manageable tasks can help get us there. She spoke about the framework in *The Four Pivots* by Shane A. Ginwright, which includes awareness, connection, vision, and presence. Council Member Fullerton appreciated the Vision pivot: from problem-fixing to possibility-creating. She expressed the challenges in the healthcare workforce sphere, and pondered: When there is such a need for problem solving, how do we create and make time for a transformative viewpoint?

Council Member Franklin-Phillips said words like "belonging" and "inclusion" feel empty when there are no tangibles attached to them. She emphasized economic impact, such as being able to staff nursing facilities with folks look like the communities that live there. She noted how these issues have intensified during the pandemic.

The theme that struck Council Member Johnson the most from John A. Powell's speech was love. She asked: How do we bring love into this atmosphere and into this work? Council Member Huynh said that while the English language only has one word for love, other languages have many words for different types of love. She suggested that a love for humanity could be a part of the work we do.

Vice Chair Rodriguez shared that he thinks about belonging and power, and the powers that come with belonging. Council Member Williamson reflected that belonging should be including involving young people in the power process. Bringing love into government and Council work can encourage us to act in bold ways, instead of state agencies waiting to react.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

No participants were signed up to give public comment at the designated time.

5. SOCIAL EQUITY AND CANNABIS TASK FORCE (SECTF): REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Vice Chair Rodriguez invited Task Force leadership and staff to present their findings from the Social Equity in Cannabis Task Force work. Jim Makoso, Community Co-Chair

for the SECTF, and Senator Rebecca Saldaña, Legislative Co-Chair for the SECTF, thanked the Council for the space and introduced themselves.

Lauren King, SECTF Policy Analyst, shared the SECTF's final report and recommendations (presentation on file). The recommendations are based on four principles: Access, Industry Support, Opportunity, and Community Investment.

SECTF Co-Chair Makoso reflected on how relating social and health equity to the cannabis industry shined a light on a number of areas. One area that routinely came up was the pain of marginalization felt by Black and Brown communities, especially in an industry that contributes \$1.8 billion in revenue and over half a billion dollars in tax revenue to the state's prosperity. Cannabis policy was a tool used to marginalize his community, the Black community, and now that community is being excluded from the chance of using the cannabis industry to build generational wealth. He shared that the SECTF heard many voices, all of them meaningful, even the ones that disagreed. As challenging as the process was, he expressed hope for the future and the state. He shared the importance of being intentional about leading with love and using love as a cornerstone in pushing for equity, health, and governance.

Senator Saldaña shared next steps. The Legislature funded \$200 million for community reinvestment and the Department of Commerce is engaging community to understand where those investments should go. She said there may be a role for the Council to be involved in determining how the state measures social determinants of health and outcomes when it engages in restoration and repair. She recognized that the SECTF may not have been healing for community members, who are retraumatized every time they share their story. We should think about how we repair harm for individuals as well as how to change the system so others don't have to experience the same trauma. When we think about belonging, co-creation, and deep democracy, the Legislature will continue to look to the Executive Branch and councils to find ways to embed equity further upstream.

Lauren highlighted the importance of communicating with communities. She shared some challenges related to holding space for and engaging community members who have deep pain and trauma.

Co-Chair Makoso highlighted some of the SECTF's successes. He said the SECTF grew from a small microcosm to being center stage among the industry, advocacy groups, agencies, and legislators. He recounted invigorating experiences seeing the SECTF's recommendations incorporated in legislation. The SECTF succeeded in shining a light on how under-represented Black and Brown communities are in the industry.

Council Member Franklin-Phillips thanked SECTF chairs and staff. She appreciated that transparency and accountability seem like a staple in the SECTF. Chi Koumbassa shared that healing comes with reconciliation and reparations.

Council Member Fullerton asked if there was discussion on 'clean slate' legislation, as she has worked with background checks in the healthcare system, which are used to screen access for licensure. Lauren stated the discussion of expungement was about

individual records and applications, not about a global system. She stated there was consideration for funding, as automatic expungement requires expensive software and SECTF members wanted to ensure that cost would not impede legislation.

Vice Chair Rodriguez stated that these issues are an expression of inequitable distribution of power and resources, and that community engagement is a key mechanism to make sure democracy is working properly. There needs to be an effort to ensure the public can connect issues to legislation. He encouraged Council members to bring this conversation on community engagement to the redesign discussion happening in the afternoon.

The Council took a lunch break at 11:51 a.m. and reconvened at 12:21 p.m.

6. COUNCIL REDESIGN

Jessica Zinda, Council Member and Redesign Co-Chair, connected the Council's redesign process to Washington's goal of becoming a Belonging state. She asked the Council how incorporating Belonging can incorporate anti-racism in our work and statute. She also acknowledged the need for government to address its role in creating harm, past and present, as well as mitigating harm.

Staff Member Huynh gave an overview of the redesign process and today's meeting materials.

Participants moved to breakout rooms where Vice Chair Rodriguez and Council Member Zinda facilitated discussion on the current state of the Council statute and ideas for updates. They focused conversation on the following areas of statute:

- Intent: What does the state hope to achieve?
- Purpose: What is the Council's reason for being, including our main role and need(s) we must address?

The Council took a break at 1:55 p.m. and reconvened at 2:10 p.m.

6. COUNCIL REDESIGN (CONTINUED)

Council Member Zinda invited participants to share key insights from the breakout rooms.

Themes from breakout room discussion:

- Anti-racism
- Centering community
- Social determinants of health
- Sustained healing
- Influencing policy and legislation
- Framing matters using power language ("we will" vs. "we will strive")

- Aligning efforts with partners, such as the Environmental Justice Council and Office of Equity

Vice Chair Rodriguez stated his biggest takeaway is to be intentional about the words we use. Word choice can change the overall message, such as removing “health disparities” and “healthiest state” to focus on equity and anti-racism. Council Member Sallee stated that if we know our intent is to focus on health equity through a lens of anti-racist action, that clarifies what we want to do in the future. Using the phrase “for all people” resonates with her, rather than using gendered terms.

Council Member Sallee said there was a conversation around statute language of creating “the healthiest state in the nation by striving to eliminate health disparities”. She said this could be updated to better reflect the Council’s operating principles. Council Member Huynh said the concept of being the best in the nation and closing disparity gaps for the sake of closing gaps (e.g., potentially bringing everyone to the middle) should not be our goal. Instead, she prefers the [Targeted Universalism](#) approach, which establishes a higher benchmark and can be used to move everyone up together. Every person’s and every community’s need is different—they should receive services and support that are uniquely responsive to their needs.

Staff member Huynh shared next steps and said there will be a redesign workshop in January. She reminded participants that this is a continuing conversation over the next year and we will do our best to promote continuity between sessions. Vice Chair Rodriguez said this is an amazing community and asked everyone to share information with their networks and contacts.

7. HEALTH EQUITY ZONES (HEZ) INITIATIVE

Vice Chair Rodriguez invited Department of Health staff to speak about the ongoing Health Equity Zones (HEZ) project.

Brianne Ramos and Anne Farrell-Sheffer, Department of Health (DOH), provided an overview of the HEZ Initiative and phases of the project (presentation on file). The initiative implements Senate Bill 5052 (Chapter 262, 2021 Laws) and uses a place-based approach that centers local needs, assets, and solutions. There is an understanding of meeting people where they are at and providing solutions at a local level.

Quyen Huynh, Council Member and HEZ Community Advisory Council Sector Representative, shared that the HEZ Initiative uses a collaborative model. The Community Advisory Council and Community Workgroup guide development and implementation. There is a communication feedback loop between the two groups as a tactic to recognize and disrupt government-controlled power and build trust in the community.

Brianne reviewed the 3-phase timeline: Phase 1 – planning; Phase 2 – development; Phase 3 – implementation; and Phase 4 – sustaining. She said the pilot program will include 3 initial zones: 1 urban, 1 rural, and 1 tribal. The advisory group and workgroup are currently designing the selection criteria and expect the application process to begin in early 2023.

Once zones are selected, DOH staff will support each zone through a 2-year process. In year 1, zones will identify health priorities that uniquely impact their community and begin developing action plans that feature local solutions. DOH will provide each zone \$200,000 per year for 2 years to implement action plans. Funding will be comprehensive, giving each zone the flexibility in how they want to fund their project. DOH is committed to supporting the sustainability of zones by identifying sources of funding after the initial 2 years.

Presenters invited Health Disparities Council members to participate in HEZ community workgroup meetings (held on the second Tuesday of each month from 1-3 pm), inform their communities and partners about upcoming info sessions, sign up for the HEZ newsletter, and continue to keep open communication. Anne shared that DOH staff supporting the HEZ project are considering how to bring lessons back to the agency to center community in decision-making.

Vice Chair Rodriguez asked if Accountable Communities of Health (ACH) are involved in the HEZ process. Council Member Huynh confirmed that HCA works closely with ACHs and there is at least one ACH leader in the advisory group.

Vice Chair Rodriguez reflected on how investment and interventions can be aligned across state agencies. He asked how Health Equity Zones can help define priorities and increase collective investment in neighborhoods from all agencies. He also asked about the scope of health topics that will be addressed through the Initiative.

Brianne said that a unique feature is that decisions will be left to community collaboratives in each selected zone. There will be a community assessment to understand the individual needs of the zone, which could include the social determinants of health. For example, a tribal leader suggested the Initiative could provide support for language classes to promote health in Native communities and include cultural practices as part of education. Brianne acknowledged that consideration would also depend on resources and feasibility. Anne stated the funding is not categorical or limited to a range of priorities. There is also space for DOH to act in a capacity-building role to support the community collaboratives. For example, there is an epidemiologist on staff to help gather data as guided by the collaboratives.

Council Member Franklin-Phillips reflected on how we can demystify the role of government during community engagement, creating a space for those community members to continue playing a role in government efforts after the engagement process. Vice Chair Rodriguez connected the HEZ to the Council's redesign project and how we should think of this work as being a part of a larger ecosystem.

9. PREPARING FOR THE 2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Staff member Huynh recapped the Council's procedure on determining when and how to engage with the Legislature. She gave an overview of how Council staff monitor legislation and said they will flag bills that: 1) directly impact our statutory powers and duties or 2) directly relates to policy recommendations adopted by the Council. She also reviewed the roles of Council Chair, Vice-Chair, and members during legislative session.

Vice Chair Rodriguez invited Council members to share their agency priorities.

Council Member Klontz reported that some Department of Commerce priorities include affordable housing and addressing homelessness, with a housing first model. She stated that they are approaching the work with an equity lens and are collaborating with the Office of Equity and the Poverty Reduction Work Group. Commerce is also promoting initiatives around broadband internet to ensure all parts of the state have access, as well as local government investments in clean energy, and ensuring everyone in the state has a place to work.

Mary Sprute Garland, Policy Advisor for DCYF, shared some DCYF priorities, including early learning, child welfare, supporting pregnant and parenting populations, investment in the state preschool program, and the juvenile rehabilitation system. Mary highlighted a housing support package that would provide support for young people exiting foster care, families at risk of entering foster care, and families attempting reconciliation.

Council Member Zinda shared that DSHS has a new Secretary who has created new priorities, some of which include modernizing the agency's IT infrastructure to get people services faster; implementing the state's Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) framework; stabilizing staffing levels; helping people transition to community living; transforming behavioral health; and developing a sustainable infrastructure.

Council Member Johnson shared that the Department of Agriculture is focused on 3 buckets of policy: promoting equity; addressing environmental pests; and collaboration. She identified specific topics, including meeting Title VI mandates, advancing environmental justice, the Feeding Washington program, and funding local food system and infrastructure grants.

Council Member Fullerton said the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board's two big focus areas are support for the Washington Career Bridge website and funding for a clean energy technology advisory committee. She also provided updates on recommendations from the Behavioral Health Workforce Advisory Committee and the Healthcare Workforce Council, including wage changes in response to workforce recruitment and retention; relieving the healthcare worker debt burden; improving the collection of workforce data; and increasing access to quality and affordable childcare.

Council Member Sallee shared that the Department of Ecology is working on implementing PEAR and is conducting an agency-wide diversity, equity, inclusion, and respect assessment. They are focused on hiring an equity-focused communications consultant and staff to implement the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act.

Council Member Huynh reported that the Healthcare Authority has developed a strategic plan to implement PEAR, starting with four focus areas: community engagement, data strategy and reporting, leadership and operations, and workforce equity. HCA is also advocating for funding to implement the Governor's PEAR initiative, which could have overlap with the Council.

10. COMMENTS, FEEDBACK, AND REFLECTIONS

Hearing multiple Council members share the difficulty of implementing the state's Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) strategy without additional funding, Vice Chair Rodriguez reflected on how white supremacy and racism maintains the status quo by pitting groups against each other through narratives of scarce resources. He stated there could be a role for the Council in sketching out the ecosystem of equity work across the state, and that there needs to be an acknowledgement that no one agency, alone, can change inequities being produced by interlocking systems. There needs to be an understanding of what each initiative is focused on and how they connect to each other. Something to consider during the redesign process is how the Council can shape narratives within the Legislature and, in turn, help shape priorities. The Council is in a position to connect various issues affecting health equity such as environmental justice, recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and Racism is a Public Health Crisis.

Council Member Zinda expressed gratitude for the work done today, especially in the breakout rooms, and that she feels we are getting close to having a draft completed for a redesigned statutory intent. Council Member Sallee extended gratitude to Council Member Zinda for taking on the additional work of co-leading redesign efforts.

ADJOURNMENT

Victor Rodriguez, Council Vice Chair, adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

GOVERNOR'S INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HEALTH DISPARITIES

Benjamin Danielson, Chair

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