



**Draft Minutes of the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities**

**January 30, 2024**

Hybrid Meeting

Physical meeting at:

WA State Department of Health

111 Israel Road SE, Town Center 2, Room 153

Tumwater, WA 98501

Online via Zoom

**Council members present:**

Courtney Cecale

Benjamin Danielson

Michelle Davis (Alternate)

Lydia Faitalia

Renee Fullerton

Jennifer Helseth (Alternate)

DoQuyen Huynh

Nicole Johnson

Diane Klontz

Stephen Kutz

Elizabeth Perez

Jessica Hernandez

Jessica Zinda

**Council members absent:**

Victor Rodriguez

Willie Frank

Kelly McLain (Alternate)

Lena Nachand (Alternate)

Millie Piazza

María Sigüenza (Alternate)

Kendrick Stewart (Alternate)

Greg Williamson

JanMarie Ward (Alternate)

**Staff present:**

Anna Burns, Communications Specialist

Melanie Hisaw, Executive Assistant

Jo-Ann Huynh, Administrative Assistant

LinhPhụng Huỳnh, Council Manager

Michelle Larson, Communications

Manager

**Additional participants:**

Hawa Elias, Community Health Plan of Washington

Rosa Potts, Public Participant

Ashley Bell, WA State Board of Health

Hannah Haag, WA State Board of Health

During the virtual meeting, approximately 23 members of the public joined. The Council thanks all those who took time to join and share their experiences and perspectives during the meeting.

Benjamin Danielson, Council Chair, called the public meeting to order at 9:31 a.m. and shared welcoming remarks. Participants introduced themselves and responded to the prompt: “What strength are you bringing today?”

Some responses included:

- Peace, growth, and joy.
- Engagement even through chaos going on in the surrounding environment.
- My whole self and my ears. Listening and understanding.
- Hope and perspective of making a difference through this work.
- “Change is possible and we just need to keep working on it.”
- Flexibility, partnership, collaboration, and kindness.
- Patience, authenticity, gratitude, and a desire to learn with grace.
- Creativity, clarity, and consciousness.
- A sense of pride envisioning the Council’s goals.

Chair Danielson remarked on how each individual contributes to a diversity of skills in the group. He said this group of people have a rare opportunity to do significant things through collective action. He said that the group’s transactions of working together is secondary to our relationships with one another and how we work together.

### **1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA—POSSIBLE ACTION**

**Motion:** [Approve January 30, 2024 agenda.](#)

**Motion/Second:** [Hernandez/Helseth. Approved unanimously.](#)

### **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES—POSSIBLE ACTION**

**Motion:** [Approve December 14, 2023 minutes.](#)

**Motion/Second:** [Kutz/Johnson. Approved with 1 abstention \(Danielson\).](#)

### **3. COUNCIL BUSINESS AND UPDATES**

LinhPhung Huỳnh, Council Manager, provided updates on Council business, including:

- The Council’s [State Action Plan update](#) (on file) was finalized and sent to the Governor’s Office and the healthcare committees of the Legislature.
- Linh presented to the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA) on January 27, 2024, sharing an overview of the Council and the Council’s redesign efforts. One CAPAA Commissioner shared that the Council’s foundational truths are spot on and reflective of their community’s priorities too. There was a question about how the Council plans to develop a statewide vision for health and wellbeing and the role of community in that project.
- Council membership updates:
  - The Governor reappointed Victor Rodriguez, Vice Chair, to the consumer representative seat for a third term, which ends September 2026.
  - Sara Franklin-Phillips stepped down from her seat on the Council representing the Commission on African American Affairs (CAAA).

- The Council's seat for the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has been vacant since 2022.
- Courtney Cecale, Council Member (Department of Ecology - Ecology), will now serve as the primary representative for Ecology and Millie Piazza will serve in an alternate role.
- Leah Wainman resigned. The second consumer representative seat on the Council is open, and Linh shared information about how to apply (see [link](#)).
- Health Impact Review (HIR) Program updates:
  - The HIR team completed two Interim HIR requests in early January, including a review of ESHB 1589 (related to clean energy) and HB 1859 (related to long-term care residents). The HIR team provided impartial testimony on HB 1859 in the House Health Care and Wellness Committee on January 23.
  - So far, the Team has received three HIR requests for the 2024 Legislative Session, two of which were updates to HIRs completed last Legislative Session. These included SHB 1368 (related to zero-emission school buses) and SB 5002 (related to alcohol concentration). The third request is on SB 6172 (related to birth doulas), which was received from Senator T'wina Nobles, who is a first-time HIR requester.
  - Linh also shared information about how HIRs are conducted and how Council members are notified about HIRs.

Chair Danielson thanked staff and complimented the HIR team's work. Stephen Kutz, Council Member (State Board of Health – Board), spoke about his limited bandwidth to read HIRs but complimented their quality. Renee Fullerton, Council Member (Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board – WTB), shared in the Zoom chat that she is looking forward to the review on SB 6172 (related to birth doulas). Michelle Davis, Council Member (Board), encouraged Council members to look at the 1–2-page executive summary included in each HIR.

Member Kutz spoke about the issue of inequity by omission, which can be a problem in proposed legislation. He gave an example of proposed laws to increase Medicaid rates that do not simultaneously increase the encounter rate for Tribal members, and how this widens the access gap for Tribal members. Lydia Fitalia, Council Member (Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs – CAPAA), said she is curious to see how Tribal and additional perspectives are included in the HIR process.

Chair Danielson asked about OSPI representation. Linh said the last Council representative for OSPI was Haley Lowe in 2022, and that she is working with OSPI on an appointment to the Council.

#### **4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Danielson announced the Council was transitioning to the public comment period and read from a prepared statement (on file).

No members of the public signed up for public comment.

The Council took a break at 10:30 a.m. and reconvened at 10:40 a.m.

## 5. UPDATES: COUNCIL REDESIGN PROPOSAL AND HOUSE BILL 2346

Chair Danielson and Jessica Zinda, Council Member (Department of Social and Health Services) and Redesign Co-Lead, transitioned the discussion to the Council's redesign proposal.

Linh gave an update on the status of the Council's request legislation and budget request (presentation on file).

Council Members opened the floor for discussion. Topics included:

- **Funding.** Chair Danielson asked Linh to share about what could be done with the reduced funding plan that the Governor's Office approved. Linh said that with this level of funding, the Council could hire up to five additional staff by June 2025. She said that hiring would need to be staggered to allow for staff acclimation. She said that after hiring staff, some funding would be available to support public meetings, community forums, and for limited language access support. She said that the Council would have some support for training and facilitation for Council Members, and for dedicated audio/visual equipment to support with hybrid meetings. Nicole Johnson, Council Member (Department of Agriculture), asked whether the Council could ask for the remaining funding in the future. Linh said yes, the Council can submit another decision package in the future to request additional funding.
- **Community engagement.** Member Zinda asked if the reduced funding would mean less community engagement. Linh said yes; in the original proposal, the Council asked for more community engagement coordinators across the state as we have heard feedback that it is not feasible for one person to cover large geographic areas and many sectors. Member Johnson said that communities would like to see government reaching out to them more frequently. Linh agreed, saying that community members have talked about how it would be helpful to have a staff person who is local and can attend community meetings. She said that this is why it would be helpful to have multiple community engagement coordinators.
- **Resource sharing.** Member Faitalia said CAPAA could support additional community engagement work and asked other Commissions and partners to support the Council in this way as well. Elizabeth Perez, Council Member (Department of Health – WSDOH), said that WSDOH has a wide network of community collaboratives, as well as regional offices across the state that support community members and local health jurisdictions. She invited staff to use these resources.
- **Youth representation on the Council.** Member Johnson said that she is very supportive of formally including youth voice on the Council. She mentioned that some of her agency's bills have also included this aspect, and she asked if other agencies have successfully recruited youth representatives. Chair Danielson said that Greg Williamson, representative from the Department of Children, Youth, and

Families (DCYF) may be a good source of guidance for that. Leah Wainman, public participant, shared that WSDOH, Health Care Authority (HCA), and the Office of Superintendent of Public Education (OSPI) have been working together on the Healthy Youth Survey and have successfully engaged youth in developing new survey questions. She also shared that that group has a youth advisory committee with both Tribal and non-Tribal representatives.

## 6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Danielson announced the Council was transitioning to the public comment period and read from a prepared statement (on file).

Anita Ahumada, Interpreters and Language Access Commission (ILAC), shared a comment in the Zoom chat. She said that there is a tremendous shortage of language interpreters across the state, with the shortage of ASL [American Sign Language] interpreters being the most severe. She said that ILAC and the Washington State Coalition for Language Access are working to develop local ASL training programs and get collaboration from other states' training and certification programs. She mentioned that Spokane has been greatly affected by the lack of ASL interpreters.

Member Kutz spoke to the need for adequate compensation for interpreters.

The Council took a break at 11:31 a.m. and reconvened at 11:41 a.m.

## 7. DISCUSSION: 2024-2025 OUTLOOK

Chair Danielson transitioned the discussion to the Council's plans for 2024-2025. He said that there are a range of possible scenarios for the Council's redesign in 2024, based on what happens with the Council's request legislation and funding request. He said that Session will move at a very fast pace, and though the Council cannot create a detailed roadmap until we see the results of Session, we can position ourselves to be ready to take advantage of any statutory or budgetary changes.

Linh presented an overview of possible major areas of work between 2024 and 2026 (see presentation on file).

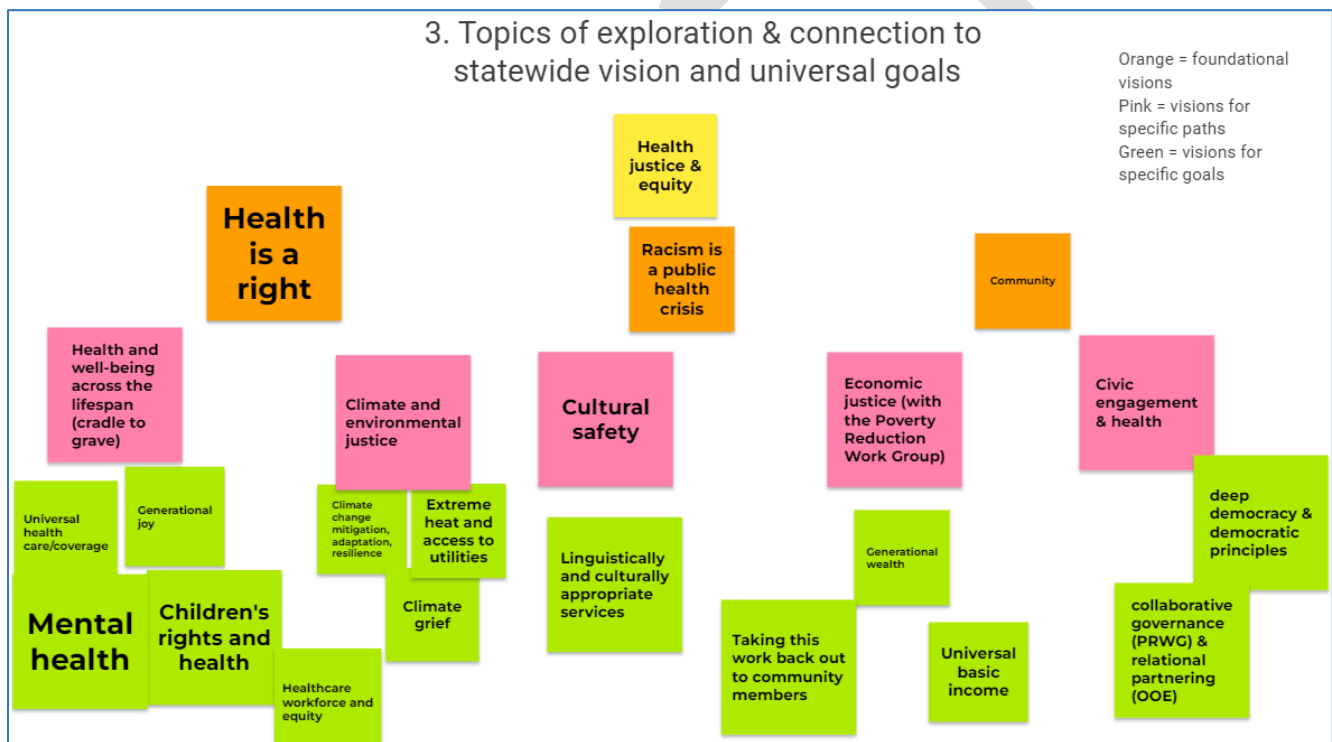
Meeting participants transitioned to breakout rooms to discuss the following questions:

1. Responsibilities and timelines in the 2024-2026 overview. Are there additional or different priorities you would suggest?
2. Feedback on staff recommendations for Spring – Summer 2024
3. Health topics of interest and their connection to development of the statewide vision and universal goals
4. How might we adapt if HB 2346 does not pass this year or we do not get enough funding? How could we navigate our current statute and maximize positive impact?

The full group came back together and shared discussion highlights.

- Group B said their group focused on questions 3 and 4.

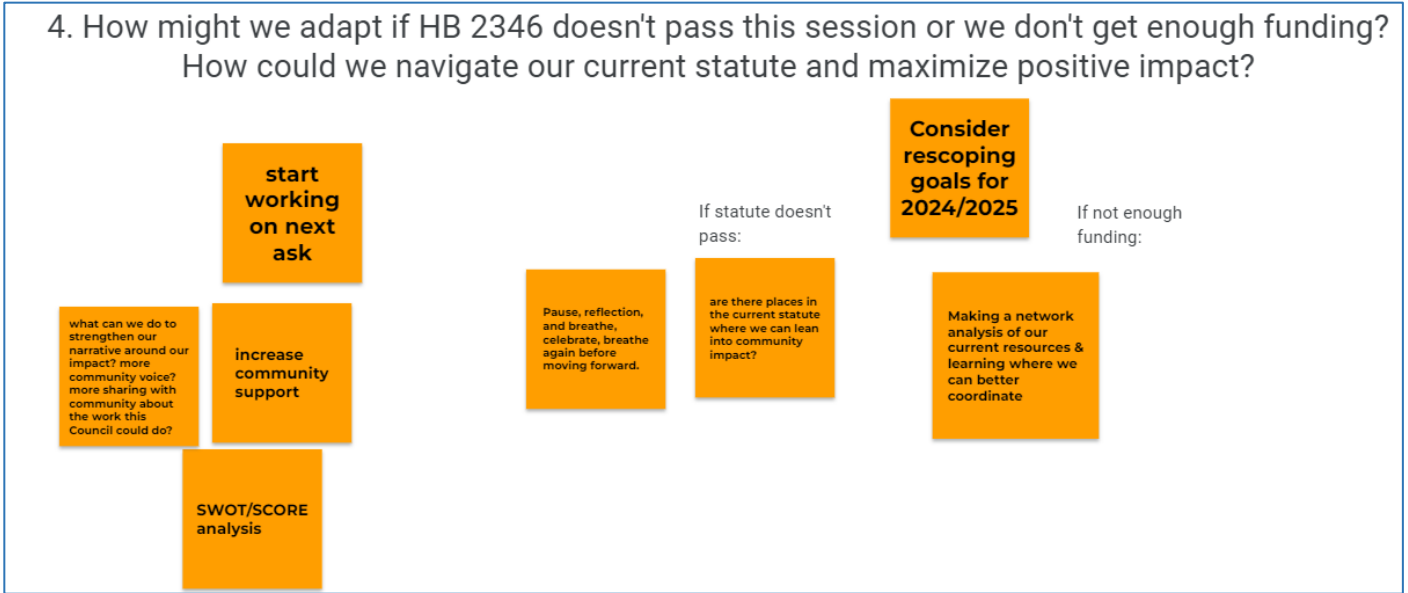
For Question 3 (see image below – alt text available), Member Zinda reviewed how her group organized topics. Leah Wainman, public participant, appreciated the inclusion of “civic engagement and health” as a goal and connected it to the power of community. Leah also appreciated how their group was able to bring forth experiences collaborating with the Poverty Reduction Work Group. DoQuyen Huynh, Council Member (Health Care Authority), spoke from her position as a medical provider supporting rural and underserved populations, Council Member, and member of an agency in the Washington Health and Human Services Enterprise Coalition (HHS Coalition). Member Huynh said she wanted to emphasize issues around healthcare workforce, especially regarding equity.



For Question 4 (see image below – alt text available), Member Zinda said participants primarily discussed how to start forming the next legislation or funding request for next year’s Legislative Session if the Council’s proposals do not pass this session. She spoke about Member Faitalia’s work increasing community support through CAPAA and how Council Members could do that work with other community groups. She also said that the Council may have to rescope its goals depending on whether the statute does not pass or whether the Council does not receive enough funding. Leah Wainman suggested adding a sticky note calling for an intentional

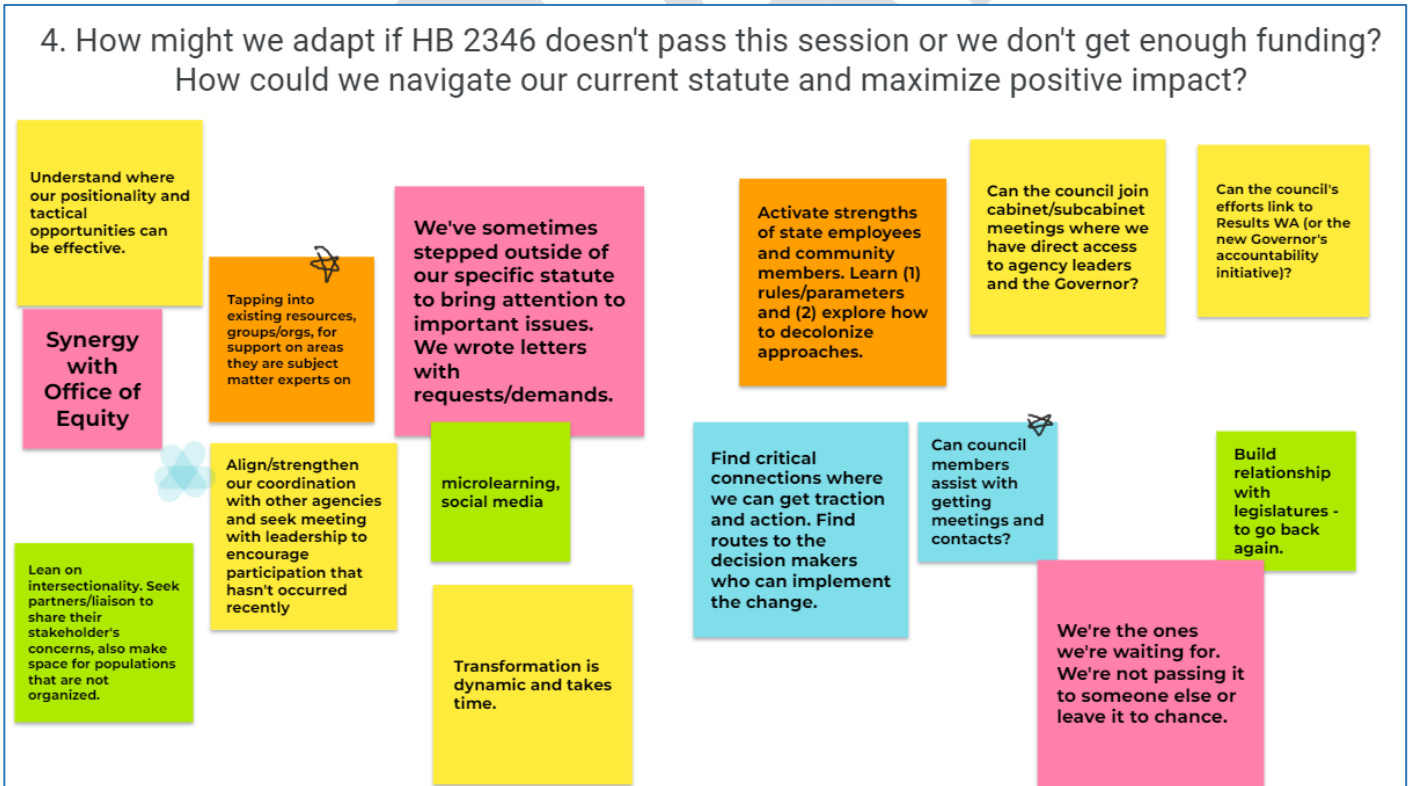
pause if things do not pass. Member Zinda suggested adding celebration and a moment to breathe as actions.

4. How might we adapt if HB 2346 doesn't pass this session or we don't get enough funding?  
How could we navigate our current statute and maximize positive impact?



- Group A shared highlights from their discussion on Question 4 (see picture below – alt text available).

4. How might we adapt if HB 2346 doesn't pass this session or we don't get enough funding?  
How could we navigate our current statute and maximize positive impact?



Chair Danielson said group conversation focused on what the Council could do, instead of what the Council is constrained from doing. He said they also talked about the continuous process of influencing government. Member Kutz said that the Council wants to make a difference at the state-agency and community levels. He said that agency staff are committed to making a difference, and the Council needs to be strategic in thinking about how we want to do that. He shared his experience advocating for the Council during Legislative Session and suggested that other Council Members do the same. Member Klontz discussed possible communication strategies for the Council. Member Kutz highlighted the importance of storytelling and suggested creating video-based content for the Council.

## **8. ANNOUNCEMENTS, FEEDBACK, AND REFLECTIONS**

Chair Danielson invited Council Members and other participants to share announcements, feedback, and reflections.

Member Kutz shared reflections about the legislative process and encouraged the Council to both think big and about specific things we want to see change.

Member Zinda thanked Council Members for their hard work on the Council's agency request legislation.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Danielson adjourned the meeting at 12:54 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 the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities, at 360-236-4102 or by email at [healthequity@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:healthequity@sboh.wa.gov) TTY users can dial 711.

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