Connecticut Commission on Health Equity

Executive Committee

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Minutes to the April 20, 2010 Meeting
Legislative Office Building Room 1B

Present: Lorraine Carrano, Glenn Cassis, Jeannette DeJesus, Kelson Ettienne-Modeste, Ann Ferris, Paul Flinter, Sylvia Gafford-Alexander, Colleen Gallagher, Cathy Graves, Marja Hurley, Elizabeth Krause, Doreen McGrath, Jose Ortiz, Werner Oyandel, Stephanie Paulmeno, Marie Spivey, Gregory Stanton, Tory Westbrook, Michael Williams, and Vicki Veltri from the Office of the Healthcare Advocate

Absent: Kenneth Alleyne, Paul Cleary, James Gatling, Meg Hooper, Marie Kirkley Bey, Natasha Pierre, James Rawlings, Janet Williams

I. Chair Marie Spivey welcomed the commission and visitors to the meeting and requested a roll call to determine attendance. Vicki Veltri conducted the roll call.

II. Marie informed the commissioners that she met with Dean Cato T. Laurencin, M.D., Ph.D., Vice President for Health Affairs at the University of Connecticut. UConn's Center for Health Disparities Research, being developed by the University will be available to the Commission. Marie and Dr. Laurencin have documented letters of support for each other's organizational efforts.

III. Regarding the Commission's Annual Report, Marie stated that the CT Health Foundation has agreed to provide a policy analyst to help write the report. Marie thanked Pat Baker and Elizabeth Krause from the foundation for their help.

IV. Work Plan draft –Marie stated the language of the legislation determined the Commission's and ultimately each Committee's mandates. The two most critical items: collect and analyze data related to health disparities, and acquire the resources to construct the first written annual report. The responsibilities of each committee are clarified in the work plan. The last committee listed on the Work Plan is the addition of a Resource Development Committee.

a. Greg Stanton requested clarification regarding the changes to the workgroup assignments. He asked who created the work plan. Marie stated that she reviewed the legislation immediately after having been elected Chair and carefully identified the responsibilities as specifically stated in the legislative language. Marie stressed that the Work Plan is a draft and encouraged comment between now and the next meeting on May 18th.
b. Stephanie Paulmeno stated that as a member of the SustiNet Prevention Committee, it lends itself well to the Resource Development issues facing the Commission and would seek to develop collaborative efforts. Marie stated that many other organizations have expressed interest in collaborative efforts with the commission.
c. Michael Williams questioned whether or not the timeline of Work Plan is only until the end of June 2010? Marie said that the point of the drafted Work Plan is to frame the mandated objectives addressed in the legislation and ensure that the work is underway. The work began in 2009 and will continue during 2010 until the report has been completed. She is not sure the Commission will have the report completed by June 2010, and is concerned that everyone will not have had an opportunity to comment if that date is maintained. She will contact the appropriate legislators to ask for an extension for that time frame if necessary once the consultant has had the opportunity to review the work to date. The Commission will have the opportunity to become more involved in the process at the next meeting when the consultant is present.
d. Glenn Cassis asked if the review of state agencies included non-profits. Marie said the legislation refers only to state agencies; however, other community-based agencies may have comments and we will decide together how information will be acquired. The Public Voice committee intends to convene public hearings where members of the public including non-profits will have an opportunity to have their voices heard.
e. Kelson Ettienne-Modeste responded to Glenn's question by stating that item five speaks to the Public Voice Committee. On behalf of the Commission the Committee does have the authority to conduct public hearings and receive testimony on matters pertaining to the objectives of the Commission. The Policy Committee on behalf of the Commission in the legislative language, has the authority to survey state agencies.
f. Marie again implored the Commissioners to decide which committee they would like to participate in if they are not already involved in one of the committees. During the next meeting on May 18th, their decisions will be captured as part of the business discussed.

V. Marie stated that the CT Health Foundation has generously moved the ownership for the Community Health Data Scan to the Commission. The CT Health Foundation will continue to update and service the document for at least one year.

a. Elizabeth Krause added that the Community Health Data Scan was originally utilized to assist the foundation in its planning. The foundation has a section on their website with interactive maps. The foundation had been looking for a place to house the Data Scan, as it was outside of the scope of the foundation. Marie welcomed the opportunity for the Commission to house the site and work with the architect of the program for a period of time after the Health Equity Director comes onboard. We envision a couple years of transition.
b. Stephanie asked if it could go on the website for the public. Elizabeth said that it would remain as a web based document and that there is a link on the website that will be placed on the Commission's website. Vicki Veltri explained that there is a lot going on at DoIT right now related to websites and apologized for the delay in getting the Commissions website up and running already.
c. Kelson wondered how the general public particularly the disenfranchised would access this information. He wanted to ensure that everyone would have access to the information. Elizabeth said it really is going to be the Commission's responsibility moving forward to brand and to present the information in the Data Scan. Marie said that this is work that will be incorporated into the strategies of the Commission's work to address.

VI. Committee Progress Reports:

a. Policy Committee – Jose Ortiz stated that they have been interviewing staff from several state agencies. Department of Transportation and CHAFA declined to be interviewed for the moment. Questions were forwarded to the agencies prior to the interview which gave each agency a chance to prepare for the interview. The data will be compiled and included into the Annual report; however, currently until more interviews are completed, it is too premature to speak to the findings.
b. Marie asked if the Commission might want to consider alternating dates for its monthly meetings to ensure participation from the Department of Public Health. We have been informed by Meg Hooper that the department managers have executive staff meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Stephanie stated that many of the Commissioners have obligations to other committees and that changing the time would be very difficult. Marie will reconnect with the department to discuss how the Commissioner or his designee would be able to attend the Commission meetings.
c. Greg Stanton asked if DPH responded to this request in writing. He would like to be copied on all the correspondence. [because he previously pursued performance metrics and Healthy People 2010 information from DPH, consistent with one of the data work group's assigned charges. He received responses from DPH which he will forward to the policy work group.] Marie stated that DPH's response during the interview session identified that they can't change their meetings at the department to accommodate those of the Commission. All executive managers are

expected to be in the department meetings each Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

d. Information submitted to the Policy Committee members by DPH staff was several reports that had been previously prepared. Written responses to the Commission's survey questions had been prepared and were given to the members of the Policy Committee during the face-to-face interview.
e. Jeanette stated that she is concerned about DPH's lack of a committed response to the Commissions requests for participation. She suggested that they write a letter to DPH regarding this issue. Marie stated that the Commission meetings will continue as scheduled, and she will communicate with the Commissioner on behalf of the Commission regarding the legislation to communicate about the department's participation.
f. Data Group – The data workgroup has not met since they issued their report.
g. Public Voice – met 3/29/2010. Kelson stated that it is not possible to have a series of public forums at this time, but the committee would plan a series of public forums in each of the counties for the future. Kelson explained the committee's thoughts on the types and format of the public forums. He asked if the commissioners knew of any additional images that could be utilized on the new website.

Greg commented on HB 5447 regarding certificate of need. Communities would lose the ability to question a hospital's expansion. It would also allow hospitals to eliminate services without the oversight of certificate of need. Marie sent a message to the co-chairs of the Public Health committee asking them to incorporate health disparities issues in certificate of needs. Response has not yet been received.

There are proposed changes in: Substitute for Raised H.B. No. 5447 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CERTIFICATE OF NEED PROCESS (House Calendar Number 260), that are potentially detrimental to the goals of elimination of racial and ethnic health disparities in Connecticut.

1) Under Substitute for Raised H.B. No. 5447 a hospital could eliminate non-behavioral health inpatient services (e.g. Obstetrics or Neonatal Intensive Care), without oversight of the certificate of need process.

2) Under Substitute for Raised H.B. No. 5447 a hospital could expend hundreds of millions of dollars on master facilities projects without oversight of the certificate of need process because the capital expenditure threshold is eliminated.

3) Neither the current CON review criteria nor the revised criteria proposed in Substitute for Raised H.B. No. 5447 address the issue of reduction or elimination of

disparities. Example of the Rhode Island language was suggested to the Public Health Committee chairs; however, the concept is not reflected in the substitute bill.

VII. Marie reviewed the vacancies on the Commission board. There are 7 slots still to be appointed/filled.

VIII. Marie reviewed the status of the Health Equity Director position and the steps necessary to hire a professional to fit the job spec. Greg asked for clarification regarding the search group. He said there had not been a search committee formed although some members had been asked if they would like to participate. Marie indicated that if those commissioners were still interested, the process would begin as soon as we were informed by DAS/DOI that the exam questions were completed. We will have the opportunity to review the questions and then participate intimately in the interview process. Marie distributed the steps necessary leading up to the final hiring process of the candidate that she had received from DAS.

IX. Meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.