

Connecticut Commission on Health Equity Executive Committee

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

Present: Marie Spivey, Chair; Colleen Gallagher; Marie Kirkley-Bey; Jeannette DeJesus; Arvind Shaw; Werner Oyanadel; Kelson Etienne-Modeste; Doreen McGrath; Sharon Mierzwa; Michael Williams; James Gatling; Sylvia Gafford-Alexander; Meg Hooper; Marja Hurley; Paul Cleary; Elizabeth Krause; Natasha Pierre; Greg Stanton; Ann Ferris; Marta Moret; Chris Smith; Paul Flinter; Ingrid Kanian for Elizabeth Krause; Megan Powell; (several inaudible names from the general public); Africka Hinds-Ayala from the Office of the Healthcare Advocate

Absent: Kenneth Alleyne; Lorraine Carrano; Glenn Cassis; Cathy Graves; José Ortiz; Stephanie Paulmeno; James Rawlings; Janet Williams; Tory Westbrook

1. Chair Marie Spivey welcomed members of the Commission and visitors to the meeting. All present identified themselves and the organizations they were representing. She specifically thanked Representative Marie Lopez Kirkley-Bey for attending.
2. Minutes from the May 2010 meeting were approved with minor changes.
3. Marie Spivey reported on the status of the Health Equity Director position. The position was posted until June 29, 2010. The Department of Administrative Services received more than 23 applications, and is currently reviewing them for eligibility. Interviews will be set up with this Commission and the Department of Insurance. Marie said she expected the interviews to be conducted in late August, with someone being hired shortly thereafter.

Marie Spivey said that with Werner Oyanadel's assistance she has begun discussions about accessing and maximizing state, federal and private resources. She will meet with Commission subgroups within the next month to discuss resource opportunities. Ann Ferris has agreed to be a member of the resource development committee.

4. Committee reports
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Jeanette DeJesus reported for the policy committee, saying that the state department interviews for the final report had been completed with the exception of DOT. She said she received a lengthy e-mail from senior staff at DOT so she will try to piece information together.

Kelson Ettienne-Modeste reported for the public voice committee, saying they are working with Marta to create forms. He said that Michael Mitchell has been working with DOIT to get information onto the website. Marie Spivey said that it's time to develop a plan for review and dissemination of the Commission report.

Greg Stanton had nothing to report from the data committee. Marie Spivey suggested Marta meet with the data committee in August in order to review the objectives for the committee and the data sources to support and review social determinants of health that impact the health outcomes that have been identified and prioritized. Additionally, Marie said there needs to be a discussion of how resources are used to create the committee report. She said that DSS has an extensive databank that would be very helpful to access. There are many sources, and the Commission will need to provide oversight for how the data will be used to eliminate health disparities and inequities (HDEs). Meg Hooper said that DPH identifies social determinants of health on their website. DPH published a disparities report in 2009 that identified how social determinants of health are utilized by providing data in a breakdown by communities and municipalities. Marie praised the work of DPH, saying how much they had done to eliminate HDEs in Connecticut. Marie said she and the policy committee have had productive meetings with Meg, the Commissioner and Public Health Initiatives. Marie Spivey said that each committee will need to meet at least once in August in order for the Commission to complete the report.

5. Marta Moret gave a presentation on health equity plans from two different areas, Boston, Massachusetts and Washington State. She felt it would be valuable to compare Connecticut's efforts with those of other states. To access Marta's presentation, [click here](#).

Marie Spivey pointed out that Connecticut provided the leadership for the New England Partnership when the legislature established an office for Multicultural Health at DPH twelve years ago. She added that the Partnership is very large in Connecticut. Nancy Berger from the Partnership will be joining this Commission and will thus provide continuity with Partnership efforts.

Sharon Mierzwa added that there are three sites in Connecticut participating in Boston's New England efforts; one is through central AHEC in Hartford, another is through Southern Connecticut State University, and a third is through the Southeastern African-American Health Council in New London.

Marie Spivey suggested that Commission members access the Sustinet website to review all Task Force and Advisory Committee reports. Marie had been involved with the Health Disparities and Equity Committee and provided input to all the other Committees and Task Forces.

Marja Hurley recommended an article contained in Sunday's Hartford Courant entitled "Guiding Students Interested in Science," for valuable insights into the Health Professions Partnership Initiative at UConn. This initiative involves three middle schools in Hartford and a hundred high school students in Saturday and summer programs, by identifying students who are interested in the health professions and encouraging them to matriculate at one of the partner colleges. The initiative also offers programs for parents of these students, by providing information on

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health related topics that are common in minority communities. The initiative provides transportation to these programs for parents as well.

Ann said one of the mandates of this Commission is to review the Connecticut Health Information Network system. The legislature has already funded programs through CHIN involving six agencies with the leadership of DPH and the Center for Public Health and Health Policy to allow for de-identified integration of state data. This provides a platform for that data to be developed. Ann added that Connecticut is ahead of most other states in this effort. An unidentified speaker said that Washington State is a great model for tracking the chronic disease management system and linking health plan outcomes with community health center outcomes and tracking it at an aggregate level. Sylvia Gafford-Alexander suggested looking at Boston and Washington programs to learn about outcomes and impact. Marie Lopez Kirkley-Bey said the Appropriations Committee has initiated results-based accountability whereby each department needs to report to the Committee addressing results-based accountability based on specific programs. She suggested speaking with Diane Irvin regarding data gathering.

There was a discussion of the importance of locating farmers' markets in lower socio-economic neighborhoods. Some of the ideas mentioned were endorsing the acceptance of food stamps at farmers' markets, having food trucks that would bring fresh foods into various neighborhoods and providing transportation to farmers markets'. An unidentified speaker suggested that empty city-owned lots could be used for gardening, thus promoting community interaction while encouraging opportunities for physical activity while at the same time growing healthy foods. An unidentified speaker said this is occurring in New Haven under the Community Gardens Program. Another speaker said gardens are being cultivated in Connecticut prisons.

6. Marie Spivey thanked Marta, and said the information contained in her action-oriented report would launch the Commission into the next phase. Marie said Marta would be meeting with each committee within the next month and that there were was much work to be done in a short timeframe.

7. Marie Spivey said there are two seats left to be filled on the Commission. She has submitted information to the legislature for approval of a representative from the Native American community. She also said there is interest from the Connecticut Hospital Association in participating in the Commission.

8. Kelson said that it is essential to fix education problems in Connecticut in order to improve racial and ethnic gaps in health and other areas. He also greatly praised Marja's program at UConn, saying he had participated in the program over 25 years ago and that it provided a great community service.

Jeannette announced with sadness and a degree of excitement that she will be leaving the Hispanic Health Council in mid-October for a new and important opportunity to work on the elimination of health disparities across the state. She said a public announcement will be forthcoming. She also said her plans include remaining on this Commission.

Sylvia asked if consideration had been given to consulting with for-profit insurance companies to learn of any efforts they have done regarding disparities. Marie said this is an area that will be focused on as the Commission continues its work.

Meeting was adjourned.

The next Commission meeting will be September 21, 2010.