

Connecticut Commission on Health Equity Executive Committee

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Minutes to the May 15, 2012 Meeting

Legislative Office Building Room 1B

Present: Ann Ferris, Sharon Mierzwa, Sylvia Gafford-Alexander, Marie Spivey, Glen Cassis, Kristen Noelle Hatcher, Cathy Medina, Arvind Shaw, Elizabeth Krause, Jim Gatling, Werner Oyanadel, Terrence Macy, Dory McGrath, Jim Farnam

Call-in: Cathy Graves, Marjorie Colebut-Jackson, Christine Palm, Gregory Stanton

Absent: Kenneth Alleyne, James Rawlings, Michael Williams, Paul Cleary, Marja Hurley, Arvind Shaw

- Welcome and Introductions.** Marie Spivey welcomed members of the Commission and visitors. All present stated their names and organizational affiliations.
- Committee Reports. Policy Committee:** Cathy Medina provided updates for the Policy Committee. The Policy Committee has had several discussions since the meeting with state agencies that occurred on March 22nd. Several state agencies were present for the meeting that introduced the health equity guideline. The committee extended the deadline until June 1st. The meeting provided important feedback to the Policy Committee and confirmed the need to build partnerships around health equity. Each member of the Policy Committee has been assigned to several agencies to work with directly. Agencies that do not have their reports in by the deadline will not be included in the annual report. Stephanie Knutson asked for a more detailed template that agencies can use to guide this effort. Raja Staggers-Hakim emphasized that the Policy Committee is asking state agencies to provide an update on programs and services currently offered that are aligned with health equity– the submission should be more or less a summary of what agencies already have in place rather than a comprehensive plan. **Legislative Committee:** Kristen Noelle Hatcher provided updates. The committee is working on submitting a statement for the record regarding the state based health plan and will submit a neutral statement to determine if this is viable or not for CT. The Committee is looking at CHE priorities for the next session. Legislative Committee is considering legislation presented by Sharon Mierzwa on a California initiative that would create a health equity tool. Raja Staggers-Hakim offered that CHE was awarded a budget and a staff position. This followed the Legislative Committees appeal to the Appropriations Committee. Werner Oyanadel mentioned the Committee’s efforts to support SB24

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with a letter that was sent to the Governor's Office and to other key legislators. Although the bill died, the language was transferred to SB458 which will be signed by the Governor.

Data Committee: Sharon Mierzwa provided updates from the Data Committee. The Data Committee is determining what datasets can be used to inform the annual report. Further the committee is interested in determining what types of data dictionaries currently exist so that the Commission and other agencies might use similar language. Members of the committee have divided work to develop data profiles across the health indicators. Sharon Mierzwa made a motion to include behavioral health, which would encompass substance abuse, as the 7th CHE health priority area. This follows recommendations from DMHAS as a pertinent area to include. Glenn Cassis seconded the motion. Arvind Shaw asked about the inclusion of oral health. Sharon Mierzwa addressed the limited data availability in oral health care. Marie Spivey mentioned that the Co-Chair of the Region 1 Health Equity Council can be helpful with further information on oral health concerns.

Resource Development: Ann Ferris offered Resource Development Committee updates. The committee has focused on space and getting resources for the commission. The committee will process further the types of grants that CHE can take the lead on and which types CHE might be supportive on. Ann Ferris mentioned that there is not a model for CHE in applying for funding as either an applicant or co-applicant. Raja Staggers-Hakim commented that a proposal was submitted to RWJF. Sylvia Gafford-Alexander mentioned possible funding from DMHAS that CHE might use to support work with state agencies in the development of health equity plans. **Public**

Voice: Glenn Cassis offered updates for the Public Voice Committee. The Public Voice Committee started the Public Forums on May 22, 2012. A total of ten forums were planned. The Committee is collaborating with a number of groups including the Multicultural Health Partnership. The Committee will utilize a consistent format/protocol for each forum. The Committee will collect qualitative data and administer brief surveys. The documentary *Unnatural Causes* will be used to help guide the discussion. There might also be the opportunity to conduct a focus a group in one of the men's prisons. The Public Voice Committee will also work with Families in Crisis and will meet with several Men's Groups. Colleen Gallagher mentioned offered to support the Public Voice Committee's efforts with the Prison System. Jim Gatling added that there will be a forum in Torrington at City Hall. Jim Gatling also noted that the Waterbury forum will be held at New Opportunities, Inc. Commissioner Macy spoke about the healthcare of disabled populations in Connecticut. Commissioner Macy emphasized that those disabled residents who are not connected with institutions, in anyway, receive the least amount of healthcare services.

3. **Executive Directors Report:** Raja Staggers-Hakim provided updates. CHE was allocated a full time position and some funding for the upcoming legislative session. The position is written for a Master's level candidate. The position can be filled as early as late July. Raja Staggers-Hakim announced the June 15th strategic planning meeting for the CHE Board. The meeting will focus on applying an RBA model to CHE committee work. On behalf of the CHE Board, Raja Staggers-Hakim will present the Community Service Award to Representative Marie Lopez Kirkley-Bey for her contribution to the elimination of health disparities in Connecticut.
4. **New Business.** Kristen Noelle Hatcher gave a debriefing on the health and achievement gap meeting. Various stakeholders participated in the forum on May 8. The forum focused on health outcomes for children in schools and how they lead to the achievement gap. The panelists addressed how systems might work together. The meeting lead to further conversation about broader social determinants of health. Kristen Noelle Hatcher has proposed the adding of a youth committee – this will mirror what is happening at the regional level. Kristen Noelle Hatcher envisions the youth committee encompassing education nutrition, and obesity. Kristen Noelle Hatcher made a motion to begin youth committee.
5. **Presentation.** Jim Farnam of Farnam and Associates gave a presentation on the CT Data Collaborative and the CHE Portal which now sits on CT Data Collaborative Website. The Data Collaborative is a public/private partnership to advance the use of data for strategic planning purposes. The Collaborative focuses on data policy and data standards. Access and capacity building is also a significant part of the work. Jim gave a demonstration of the CHE portal site –

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which is a flexible platform with multiple levels of access and use. Jim reviewed various functions of the portal including customized views, the ability to disaggregate measures, and a knowledge center.

6. **Meeting is adjourned.**