

State of Connecticut



Commission on Health Equity

**Communication Plan:
Public Voice Committee
of the
Commission on Health Equity
DRAFT # 6 September 1, 2009**

Background:

To inform the findings and recommendations included in a January 2010 annual report to the Governor, the Commission on Health Equity developed three work groups to: a) Collect and analyze **data** relevant to the mission of the Commission in order to inform its arguments, recommendations and call for action; b) monitor, review, analyze and comment on the impact of current or proposed **legislation and policies** on the Commission's mission; and c) build **public voice**, public involvement and public support for the Commission's work.

The Public Voice Committee of the Commission on Health Equity was convened as an arm of the Commission on Health Equity. It is one of three working committees intended to further the mission of the Commission. The Committee's mandate is to develop an effective and comprehensive series of Commission-authorized and State-approved mechanisms for enhancing communication between individual Commission members, the Commission as whole, members of the public and private sector agencies, and our elected legislators and officials.

Strategic planning toward this end incorporates, among other strategies, the development of a multi-lingual, comprehensive, and user-friendly website that will include a variety of communication techniques and venues, and will be in full compliance with the State of Connecticut's most current policies on health information technology, computer technology transmissions, and website development and

inclusions, in accordance with the Connecticut Department of Information Technology (DUIT) protocols.

The communication plan, through the website development process, addresses what the Commission on Health Equity is, its approved mission statement, purpose, and goals and the definition of health that the Commission has determined would best inform its work. It defines the issues the Commission wants to communicate, and identifies the people and groups the Commission has determined are, or could be impacted by health inequities, and how that would be accomplished.

The outcome of the planning process includes mechanisms for the public and elected officials to identify the appointed members of the Commission on Health Equity along with their professional and educational backgrounds and affiliations. It incorporates the inclusion of contact links for Commission members in order to enhance their availability to the public, and to agencies, departments and elected officials including lawmakers.

A chronology of implementation describes phased in cost factors being incorporated into the proposal. The proposal describes information to be imparted to the public, actions and suggestions for action that the Commission perceives would ameliorate aspects of health inequities, and ways that various types of information can be presented to the public. It allows for members of the public, as well as all others having an interest or a stake in the outcome of the Commission's work and actions, to have communication options readily available to them through links, keywords and/or contact information.

Mission Statement:

The Public Voice Committee provides the ways and means for facilitating effective two-way communication, including public forums, a newsletter, and an interactive website in order to address health equity issues across a broad scope and span. A Commission website that facilitates shared, multilingual communication with members of the public and with private, non-profit and government agencies and departments provides a formalized, transparent, and systematic mechanism to receive and respond to communications from those identified sources.

Statement of Purpose:

The Public Voice Committee serves as a vehicle that reveals, reports and makes known populations experiencing or perceiving disparities in health status based on race, ethnicity, and linguistic ability, or disparities based on such other factors as age, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or medical or mental health diagnoses, and the Commission, who is charged with a mandate from the Governor of Connecticut to identify and eliminate such health disparities.

The Public Voice Committee serves to identify and access resources aimed at educating the public about health inequities, learning about community efforts to eradicate health inequities, providing a venue for direct access to agencies, commissions, the members of the Commission on Health Equity, and the legislators and public officials who shape policies, rules and regulations.

The Public Voice Committee establishes diverse communication methods to inform the public and representatives of agencies, commissions, businesses and legislative bodies about the formation of the Commission on Health Equity, its mission and purpose, and the features available on the Commission's website.

Implementation Plan

- 1) Establish protocols and strategies whereby the Public Voice Committee and Commission adhere to the tenets of the Freedom of Information Act in the course of conducting business; this will entail an educative process for the Commission members. **Completed in the Commission meeting held on August 18, 2009.**
Outcome Measures: (No associated cost)
 - a) Public Voice members will attend an education session on the FOI Act prior to culminating communication strategies and protocols; no associated cost
 - b) Communication strategy recommendations and protocols will be reviewed in a meeting with DOIT representatives.

- 2) The public voice work group will bring the public and Commission members together with legislators in order to inform the Commission and the public, and to learn first hand, through 2-way communication between all parties, about experiences with actual or perceived health inequities. The Data Collection Committee will be asked to collaborate on the development of a survey tool to be used during this process, and on the analysis of the data gathered during these forums. **(Target Date: October 31, 2009)**
Outcome Measures: (Cost: \$3,000 for refreshments, advertisement, translation/interpreter and copying)
 - a) A minimum of 3 public forums will be held across the State annually, pro-rated to one forum for this initial fiscal year 2009/10.
 - b) Identify no-cost locations in which to hold each forum.
 - c) Distribute data collection surveys to the participants at each forum
 - d) Data collected from participants at forums will be analyzed in collaboration with the Data Committee and results displayed on the Commission's website within 30 working days of the forum.

- 3) The Communication Committee's proposal addresses public exposure about health equity issues and concerns around the state. **(Target Date: September 15, 2009)**
Outcome Measures: (Cost factors incorporated into the 0.5 FTE role)

- a) Members of the Public Voice Committee will hold a series of at least 5 planning and exploration meetings in order to design a website and develop a communication strategic plan.
 - b) A comparative analysis of the websites of at least 5 other Commissions and agencies will be reviewed for style, content, and format ideas prior to the Public Voice Committee submitting a website model upon which the full Commission may comment and vote.
 - c) The Public Voice Committee will complete the design of a website for submission to the full Commission on Health Equity
 - d) At least 8 media reports in the form of articles and editorials will be placed on the Commission website annually, pro-rated to two for this initial fiscal year 2009-10.
 - e) The Public Voice Committee will create a quarterly newsletter, which will be placed on the Commission's website, in order to report on the Commission's activities. This will be pro-rated to one for this initial fiscal year 2009-10.
 - f) The Public Voice Committee will develop and post updated multilingual "*Frequently asked Questions*" (FAQ's) sheets at least quarterly.
 - g) The Public Voice Committee will include multilingual *FACT SHEETS* on the Commission's website about health inequities that pertain to the special focus groups for which this Commission has been formed. The data will be reviewed semi-annually for updating needs.
 - h) Scan, review and summarize agency and foundation reports for the purpose of informing the public, and the commission members.
- 4) The Public Voice Committee will work to help secure the HPA 1 position that was recommended to the full Commission on Health Equity on August 18th, 2009; this position will serve as a Webmaster for the Commission's website and be responsible for adhering to the Commission on Health Equity's policies and protocols, as they become approved.

Target Date: November 17, 2009

Outcome Measures:

SALARY GROUP/RANGE: HPA 1-HC 19/\$43,690-\$58,288; CCT-HC 15-1 \$36,018 (Bachelor's); HC 15-2 \$37,317 (Master's)

(Cost: \$25,500 Salary (50% of median total Bachelor's level salary cost) plus \$14,790 (58% benefits costs) = Total 0.5 FTE cost of \$40,290)

- a) Develop Commission polices and protocols to ensure that items placed on the website are sanctioned and approved, and in full accord with the Connecticut Department of Information Technology (DOIT) protocols and the Connecticut Health Information Technology Plan, and create the mechanism by which that process occurs.
- b) Select a State technology position description for the 0.5 FTE allocated to the Commission on Health Equity, which will include in its duties the function of Webmaster; this will enable the webmaster functions to be managed within the budget and scope of the Commission on Health Equity without drawing

upon the resources of another State Office, department or commission; This position will be responsible for:

- c) Listing and keeping current on the Commission's website each member's biography and/or curriculum vitae and their full contact information, along with embedding direct links to each Commissioner; This will make each Commissioner and the full Commission accessible to the public where they can serve as community resources;
1. Including on the Commission website a *Commissioners' Page*; which will provide the Commissioners the ability to communicate on strategic planning issues and commission business;
2. Developing a hyperlink format within the Commission's website, whereby other relevant Offices, Commissions and organizations can be linked to the Commission on Health Equity; examples of these could include but not be limited to:
 - ❖ The Governor's Office
 - ❖ The offices of relevant public officials
 - ❖ Schools of public health
 - ❖ The State of Connecticut Department of Public Health
 - ❖ Local Connecticut Departments of Health
 - ❖ The Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
 - ❖ Federally Qualified Community Health Centers across Connecticut
 - ❖ The Connecticut Prison System
 - ❖ The CT Department of Justice
 - ❖ Acute care and behavioral health hospital associations (CHA & CANPFA)
 - ❖ Medical, nursing , pharmacy and other professional associations
 - ❖ The Commissions represented on the Commission on Health Equity as well as other relevant commissions
3. The Public Voice Committee will create learning-collaboratives with like-agencies, and technology communication venues in order to share information and resources regarding health disparities and related issues.

(Target Date: Initiated in January, 2010 and concluded in June, 2010)

Outcome Measures: (No associated costs)

- a) These links will include but not be limited to the NAACP, the Hispanic Health Council, National Medical Association, etc.
- b) Approximately 10-25 Memoranda of Agreement with like-agencies will be established.
- c) The Public Voice Committee will secure the necessary approvals to include within the Commission on Health Equity's website such resource information as:
 - ❖ Legislative Alerts and updates
 - ❖ Circular letters from authorized groups and agencies
 - ❖ "hot topics"

- ❖ News articles pertinent to the Commission
- ❖ An e-newsletter created by the Public Voice Committee
- ❖ Posting of approved community events and forums relevant to the mission and purpose of the Commission on Health Equity
- ❖ Twitter
- ❖ Facebook

Summarized Website Specific Tasks and Goals:

- Public Voice Group members will review the websites below(*) prior to the Public Voice Committee teleconference on 8-4-09 for the purpose of considering the following: **(Completed: 08-04-09)**

- a) Website template design format
- b) Tabs and inclusions (Legislative Alerts, Circular letters, News articles, newsletter, Community events, FAQ's, Fact Sheets, etc.)
- c) Determine the numbers of pages/tabs desired on the website
- d) Select a color schemes
- e) Mapping out the site
- f) How to achieve multilingual capacity, links and keyword features
- g) Identify mechanisms for capturing "hits" on the website

(*) http://www.ct.gov/cpi/taxonomy/ct_taxonomy.asp?DLN=48706

(*) <http://www.ct.gov/cpi/cwp/view.asp?a=940&Q=247522>

- The Public Voice Committee members will conduct a website comparison analysis prior to the Public Voice Committee meeting in Hartford on 8-13-09. **(Completed: 08-04-09)**
- A representative of the Office of The Public Advocate met on the committee's behalf with representatives of DOIT where they reviewed and discussed requirements, resource needs and limitations impacting the Commission's website design.
- Determine the priority level being afforded to the website development project in relation in relationship to other Public Voice Committee projects by **Target Date: September 15, 2009.**
- The Public Voice Committee members will review the State of Connecticut job descriptions applicable to the 0.5 FTE employee that is allowable to the Commission prior to the Public Voice Committee meeting in Hartford on 8-13-09. **(Completed: 08-13-09)**
- Identify at least 10 additional agencies for which the Public Voice Committee recommends seeking Memorandums of Understanding or Agreement with the Commission on Health Equity by **(Completed: 08-13-09)**
- Draft memorandums of Agreement/Understanding for those identified agencies, Departments and Offices whom the Commission would like to link to the Commission on Health Equity website by **(Target Date: January 2010).**

- Establish cost figures for the Public Voice Committee Proposal.
(Target Date: Completed 9-1-09).

**This document has been revised to incorporate the input from the Public Voice
Committee meeting on 9-1-09**

**Revised with the Public Voice Committee Members on September 1, 2009:
Stephanie Paulmeno**