

State of Connecticut ***Commission on Health Equity***

Meeting Summary, January 20, 2009

Commission Attendees: Nancy Berger (Department of Public Health), Martha Burr (Multicultural Health Network), Lorraine Carrano (St. Vincent's Medical Center), David Carlow (Department of Developmental Services), Paul Cleary (Dean, Yale School of Public Health), Hilary Waldman for Jeannette DeJesus (Hispanic Health Council), Efrain Diaz (DMHAS Office of Multicultural Affairs), Ann Ferris (UConn Center for Public Health and Health Policy), Paul Flinter (Department of Education), Cheryl Harris Forbes (African-American Affairs Commission), Kevin Lembo (Office of the Healthcare Advocate), Jose Ortiz (Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services), Stephanie Paulmeno (public member--Greenwich Department of Health), Natasha Pierre (Permanent Commission on the Status of Women), Jim Rawlings (Connecticut NAACP), Gregory Stanton (public member--Lawrence & Memorial Hospital)

Other Attendees: Elizabeth Brown (Commission on Children), Elizabeth Krause (Connecticut Health Foundation), Rafael Perez-Escamilla (University of CT), Robert Zavoski (DSS),

Administrative Attendees: Victoria Veltri and Robert Cruz (Office of the Healthcare Advocate)

All members were provided with a copy of the meeting agenda and a draft meeting summary from 12/15/08. All members and other attendees were asked to sign-in to confirm attendance.

After introductions, the first item for discussion was approval of the draft meeting summary from the Commission on Health Equity meeting on December 15, 2008.

Jim Rawlings stressed the importance of the electing of officers and being pragmatic about the process.

Stephanie Paulmeno asked the commission for clarity about the lacking of cultural, racial geographical amongst the proposed nominees. Kevin Lembo indicated that there were two men and two women all African American and no in Latino, Asian, Native American representation on the slate –yet.

Jose Ortiz recommended for some leadership to be elected and voting at least for the Chair person at least and be open to the other three slots to be elected in the next 30 days.

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Nancy Berger declined her nomination as secretary due to prior commitments, including her involvement with the Multicultural Health Partnership.

Gregory Stanton made a motion to suspend the election of officers until the next meeting and charge the Nominating committee with reconvening and proposing a slate of officers consistent of the type of slate the Nominating committee suggested back in December. His motion was seconded.

Jose Ortiz presented the motion for a friendly amendment for some leadership to be elected and voting at least for the Chair person at least and be open to the other three slots to be elected in the next 30 days. Gregory Stanton accepted the friendly amendment and move forward with Chair and deferred the other three slots until the February meeting. Motion to defer carried with the exception to vote for the Chair.

Jim Rawlings was nominated by Kevin Lembo for Chair and his nomination was seconded by Gregory Stanton. Jim Rawlings accepted such nomination and there were no other nominees or nominations from the floor. A unanimous voting has held and Jim Rawlings was elected as Chair.

Liz Brown suggested the idea of current members of the Nominating committee being allowed to be nominated as officers.

Jose Ortiz declined his nomination for Treasurer, not for being part of the Nominating Committee but due to prior commitments.

Next on the agenda was the report of the Finance Committee work. Jim Rawlings discussed lobbying at the legislature and contacting the Attorney General about directing resources for this Commission. Also, Jim Rawlings presented the possibility of funding by the CT Hospital Association. Another idea was mentioned by Rawlings about a retreat and a draft letter to be finalized and sent to several funders to move the commission forward. Jim Rawlings will be stepping down from the Finance committee and asked the body for other members of the Commission to join the Finance Committee.

Liz Brown asked about the possibility of obtaining monies from the State of Connecticut's budget. Jim Rawlings indicated to be highly unlikely.

Jim Rawlings indicated the need of a Chair for the Strategic Planning Committee. Stephanie Paulmeno came forward and volunteered herself to be in this committee. Gregory Stanton was nominated by Jim Rawlings to be part of this committee. Mr. Stanton asked for further clarification of the charge of the Strategic Planning Committee. Jim Rawlings stressed the enormity of the Commission's challenge and hoped to, in a 12 – 24 month period, to understand the challenges and prioritize a strategic plan via a multiyear plan of action. Gregory Stanton suggested for the Executive committee to be

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the core of the strategic planning and he will be available to assist with such charge. Liz Brown suggested having a retreat without having to wait for additional funding and get all the issues out there and have a direction of the entire body. Kevin Lembo agreed with Liz Brown's suggestions and with choosing a facilitator.

Stephanie Paulmeno came forward and nominated herself for the Treasurer position.

Paul Flinter asked to go over Section 1(e):1-9 of the By-Laws and further clarify needs to be accomplished, specifically in addressing the Commission's goals. Paul Cleary also commented about this and suggested working groups or "buckets" to start working on each of these areas/tasks and have such groups report at a retreat –to divide and conquer. Paul Clearly indicated his expertise in analyzing data and performance measures indicators and volunteered to part of buckets" 2 & 8, which he could lead. Paul suggested a bucket for 1, 3, 5, 9 & 10 to be related activity to Legislation. Another area for a bucket suggested by Paul Cleary was 7, related to review policy. Lastly he indicated 4 and a liaison function for 6 as a cross function. Kevin Lembo volunteered to be part of charge of creating these "buckets" and disseminating the information the members of the Commission.

Paul Flinter indicated about monetary resources in the Department of Education for nutritional practices, from both the Federal and State level, and suggested the creation of a catalog of the commission members indicating the resources that are enabling them to conduct work in the health area; the creation of a bucket to identify key resources.

Stephanie Paulmeno stressed the need of having Bios of the members of the commission in order to get to know each other better and their expertise and understanding of issues. Kevin Lembo indicated receiving only 3-4 bios so far. These bios are to be sent to Kevin Lembo and ultimately uploaded to the OHA Commission's webpage.

Jim Rawlings recommended for Commission members to go to the webpage and become familiar with such buckets and identify areas of interest to them as a way to pre-plan prior to the retreat. This will be a way to enable the engagement of all 30 commissioners.

Natasha suggested putting together data from reports that address what needs to be done about health disparities its recommendations. Jim Rawlings stressed the need for this and that it is actually a priority to be done in an inclusive manner.

Liz Brown suggested having a framework in place before the next meeting, taking into consideration a systems approach to this matter, given the facts that issues come from different venues –and march forward together. Also Liz Brown commented about before coming up with a solution, the Commission should come up with a consensus in defining the problem we are trying to solve and an outline for an action plan. Liz Brown also volunteered to work in establishing such framework on best practices. As a follow up, Jim Rawlings indicated the need of having leadership around these "buckets" mentioned

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earlier and urged members to come forward. Paul Cleary will lead the data performance measures buckets. Jim Rawlings mentioned that Marie Spivey's, who was not present at this meeting, interests in Legislative matters make her a good candidate to lead such bucket and that some of these positions are paid positions with remuneration.

Natasha Pierre, suggested having a meeting under the leadership of Liz Brown's framework planning committee in about one week to take a look at the buckets list and obtain commitment from members for the various buckets. Jim Rawlings suggested designating Paul Cleary's bucket as a beta model, tweak it, and then use model going forward. Members that volunteered to work with Liz Brown were Lorraine Carrano, Stephanie Paulmeno, Paul Cleary, Paul Flinter, Natasha Pierre and Cheryl Harris Forbes.

Anne Ferris indicated that prior to moving forward with the buckets, what comes first is the framework and then move forward with the working groups referred here as "buckets".

Paul Flinter questioned which reports on critical dimensions of health disparities is the Commission to look, meaning which ones to look at and go forward with on the basis of their recommendations. Natasha Pierre indicated that there were hundreds of these types of reports, but that the Commission should start by looking at the Connecticut ones. Kevin Lembo indicated that these kinds of reports are currently being collected informally and at some point these will be scanned and posted on the web. Furthermore, Kevin Lembo urged the members to forward these reports to him to compile and then prioritize and disseminate to the members of the committee. Cheryl Harris Forbes also suggested compiling of reports to not only be used for "think-tank" purposes, but also as a resource of materials to be used and move the process forward. Jim Rawlings suggested taking a look at the Commonwealth Report that looks at health disparities across all 50 states. Stephanie Paulmeno also suggested taking a look at Dr. J. Garcia's book on the impact of minority health in terms of the multicultural population.

Kevin Lembo pointed out the need for policing legislation. Natasha Pierre indicated that her office is constantly looking at gender, racial, ethnic health bills, which she can provide information about to the Commission. Natasha Pierre volunteered to coordinate the tracking of bills and forward to Kevin Lembo as precise as possible –in plain language. Then it will be decided if there is a need to testify.

Natasha Pierre indicated that the word "gender" was not included in the statute and that the PCSW wished to have such language include before the session. To add gender as one of the categories and to add the Commission on Children added to the statute, which she referred to as technical amendments. Victoria Veltri indicated that the addition of the gender requirement amendment seemed to her not to be so technical, and that a vote before moving forward should be held, providing everyone agrees to be added. Kevin Lembo held a vote on adding the Commission on Children as a standing member, as a

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technical amendment and no member was opposed. A motion was made by Natasha Pierre to add “gender” as part of the definition of the Commission’s address to health disparities. Quorum was present and the motion for amendment was second by Rob Zavoski

Victoria Veltri pointed out the need to look at other bills that are not directly related to health disparities, but that can potentially result in disparities if funding is cut or implemented in a harmful manner.

Kevin Lembo distributed Conflict statements for signature to the remaining Commission members and Victoria Veltri stressed the need for these statements to be signed and returned to OHA.

The meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting: 2/17/2009

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