

# Commission for Health Advocacy and Equity

## Meeting Notes

**Date: April 16, 2014**

**Time: 2:00 pm -4:00 pm**

**Location: R.I Department of Health State Laboratories**

*“Making strides to address health equity and the elimination of health disparities in Rhode Island”*

Members and guests present: Members: Co-chair Julie Rawlings; Kenya Fullen; Heriberto Gonzalez; Ronda Jones; Marcus Mitchell; Michael Nina; Kavita Patel; Deborah Perry; Ulli Ryder; Reginald Tucker-Seely. Ex-Officio: Jodi Bourque; Steven Florio; Philip Less; Melissa Long; Kathy Nadeau. Guests: Alysia Sylvaria; Elisabeth Becker; Jen Rocha; Angela Ankoma; Dora Dumont; Jordan Kennedy; Jill D’Errico.

Members and Ex-Officios unable to attend: Chair Tanya Dailey, MD; Omar Bah; Anna Cano Morales; Yvonne Heredia; Gloria Hincapie; Ana Cristina Lindsay; Aradhana Mehta. Ex- Officios: Lisa D’Agostino; Janice DeFrances; Aleatha Dickerson; Elizabeth Earls; Barbara Morin; Chelsea Siefert.

### **I) Call to Order**

Meeting called to order by Co-Commission Chair, Julie Rawlings

### **II) March 19, 2014 Meetings Minutes Approval**

Meeting minutes approved by Commission Members.

### **III) Comments on Agenda**

The logo that was voted on last meeting will have to include the HEALTH logo. Angela will work with HEALTH’s communications staff on this and forward the revised logo to the commission.

### **IV) Welcome New Commission Members**

A welcome to Ronda Jones and Marcus Mitchell.

### **V) Subcommittee Updates**

#### **Data Subcommittee Report**

A summary of health outcomes and key findings were presented to the commission. Any blank fields were because the committee was still looking for the data or data was not found. One suggestion was to have a working definition of what disparity is and at what point we should make a recommendation that some action should be taken. Some comparisons will be made for Rhode Island to New England and the nation, depending on the data available. The subcommittee is also meeting with HEALTH staff to see what is already being done to address specific disparities and would like to meet with academic/research groups to obtain data. One obstacle is historically the focus has been on reducing overall rates but not disparities among groups. This can be addressed in the report.

#### **Questions:**

- 1. Were other types of cancer looked at?** Yes, but the biggest disparity was on the prostate cancer (colorectal and breast also had some disparities).
- 2. Are we looking at disparities in people or infrastructure?** Both. An equitable and healthy infrastructure leads to a healthy community.
- 3. Do you have numbers for Native Americans or people with disabilities?** Some demographics have been difficult to find as this data is not always analyzed.

**Suggestions:**

- Look at the Healthy People documents-report and goals
- Mental health data may be available at RI Health Care Matters, NIH, RIAAA, the Sherlock Center, Rhode Island Commission on Disabilities, and BHDDH.
- Please bring the following question to your agencies for comment “What does a Rhode Island look like where health equity has been achieved?”

**Community Engagement Subcommittee**

A public forum was scheduled, but communication materials from HEALTH are still in the approval process, so the date will have to be pushed back. The forum, which will be recorded, will include an introduction to the commission, a slide presentation, a place matters discussion, and community questions/answers/feedback. A legal representative from HEALTH will attend the commission in June to discuss open meetings, the role of the commission, social media, communications, and other questions.

**Questions?**

**1. Will there be language barrier services available?** Not as it stands now.

**Legislative Subcommittee**

Representatives of this committee were not present, so Angela gave the update. This committee met two weeks ago to develop a work plan and timeline of legislative priorities, which will be distributed to the members at the next meeting. This committee also wants to bring attention to the commissions work and aligning with grass roots groups, creating a template for a letter of support, and holding an event to educate the gubernatorial candidates on health equity issues.

**VI) Strategic Planning**

This commission requires hours of detailed work, and the suggestion was made to have interns help with the work. Each subcommittee, as well as the Co-Chairs, would have its own intern. We are looking into paid interns, as well as academic interns. The job description will be emailed to all so that we can start the process immediately.

**Suggestion:**

See if Dr. Fine can do anything to expedite this process.

**VII) Rhode Map RI Update**

An overview of Rhode Map RI was presented.

- A draft of goals, policies, and strategies with a focus on effective use of data and health equity will be distributed for feedback
- There will be a series of public meetings in an open house format. The dates and times will be forwarded to commission members
- The Social Equity Advisory Committee developed social equity principles that were distributed

**VIII) Action items for Dr. Fine/Action Steps**

- The commission will submit a letter regarding interns for the commission.
- Legal issues regarding the time turn around on communications materials and a legal consult to discuss the by-laws will be scheduled for June
- Commission binder with all information should be developed and distributed

**Next meeting is scheduled for May 21, from 2:00-4:00 PM.**