

# Racial Equity in Public Health Commission

Executive Director: Pareesa Charmchi Goodwin

Co-Chair: Claudio Gualtieri, OPM Undersecretary for Health and Human Services

Co-Chair: Dr. Tekisha Dwan Everette, Executive Director, Health Equity Solution

---

## Regular Commission Meeting Minutes

Monday, July 25<sup>th</sup>

9:00 AM-10:00 AM

Via Teams

**Members Present:** Co-Chair Claudio Gualtieri, Co-Chair Tekisha Everette, Talitha Coggins for Astread Ferron Poole, Carline Charmelus, Chavon Hamilton, Heather Aaron, Hilda Santiago, Chlo-Anne Bobrowski for John Frassinelli, Annie Decker for Katie Dykes, Kean Zimmerman, Tina Hyde for Kim Martone, Kyle Abercrombie, Leonard Jahad, Melissa Santos, Steven Hernandez, Tammy Hendricks, Vanessa Dorantes

**Guest Present:** Executive Director for the Commission Pareesa Charmchi Goodwin

**Members Absent:** Craig Burns, Diana Reyes, Jonathan Steinberg, Kenyatta Muzzani, Marina Marmolejo, Mary Daughtery Abrams, Tiffany Donelson, Travis Simms

### Opening remarks from the Co-Chairs

Everette called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM. Attendance was taken as members signed onto Teams, so roll call was not taken. Gualtieri noted that Acting Executive Director Kim Martone would now represent OHS on the Commission.

### Public Comment

Dorantes spoke about the newly established 988 crisis hotline that replaced the ten digit, nationwide suicide hotline number. She noted a recent article in the Chicago Tribune titled “Mistrust Hinders Mental Health Line”. The article indicated there are some communities of color that are leery of this new hotline/system. She stated the Commission could play a critical role in highlighting parity between mental and physical health; enlisting credible messengers in disseminating information about mental health resources; and thinking about a 9-1-1/law enforcement response in cases of mental health emergencies. Everette and Gualtieri voiced appreciation for her remarks and noted that these immediate action steps align with the Commission’s goals and legislation (HB 5001/SB 1, SB 2) passed this year. Dorantes provided the [link](#) to the article.

### Meeting Minutes Approval

A motion was made by Abercrombie and seconded by Charmelus to approve meeting minutes from the Commission’s Fourth Regular Meeting that was held on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

### Updates from the Executive Director

Charmchi Goodwin provided the following updates on her first month in the role of Executive Director:

- The statutorily required, biannual report on commission activity was submitted to the Appropriations and Public Health Committees on June 29<sup>th</sup>. The report covered commission activities occurring between January 2022 and June 2022, along with updates on the strategic planning effort and subcommittee reports.
- Meetings with commission members and stakeholders to discuss their efforts thus far and vision for the commission have occurred and continue to be ongoing.
- Strategic planning will begin later this summer/early fall. The plan will include both long-term visioning and immediate action items.
- Job postings for an Executive Assistant and Commission Analyst will be shared on various websites (LinkedIn Idealist, Government Jobs, etc.) and circulated among commission members. If they know individuals interested in these roles, they should encourage them to apply.

There were no questions for the Executive Director.

## **Subcommittee Updates**

### *Criminal Justice*

Since the May 23 Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health (CREPH) meeting, the Criminal Justice Subcommittee (“the subcommittee”) met three times.

First, on June 9, Dr. Danielle Cooper and Erika Nowakowski from The University of New Haven Tow Youth Justice Institute (“Tow”) provided an overview of the Juvenile Justice Policy Oversight Committee (JJPOC), which was established by Public Act 14-217. The JJPOC, which receives staff support from Tow, oversees continued reform of and improvements to the juvenile justice system. Included among its charges is analyzing disproportionate minority contact across the juvenile justice system. Updates to JJPOC’s 2019 strategic plan includes the goal of reducing racial and ethnic disparities in Connecticut’s juvenile justice system. JJPOC includes the Racial and Ethnic Disparities Work Group (RED Work Group), which is co-chaired by Dr. Derrick Gordon and Hector Glynn. The RED Work Group produces recommendations annually and carries out analysis throughout the year as part of the JJPOC. More broadly, the JJPOC produces a wide array of racial and ethnic disparity data analyses as well as recommendations addressing disparity in the juvenile justice system. As the CREPH sets up its work, the JJPOC will be an important partner. Dr. Cooper and Ms. Nowakowski indicated a strong willingness to support the CREPH’s work involving juvenile justice.

Second, on June 23, staff from the YWCA Hartford Region delivered a presentation regarding *An Act Requiring the Development of a Plan Concerning the Delivery of Health Care and Mental Health Care Services to Inmates of Correctional Institutions* (Public Act 22-133). A coalition of organizations and individuals worked on the effort, which involved the introduction of the above legislation during the 2022 session of the Connecticut General Assembly. The public act requires the Department of Correction commissioner to release, by February 1, 2023, to the Public Health Committee a report containing a plan regarding health care service delivery to people housed in correctional institutions. The report covers mental health, substance use disorder, and dental care services and will, pursuant to the statutes, follow several guidelines and contain recommendations. The plan likely will contain analysis, recommendations, and other content that will be informative to the CREPH’s ongoing and future work.

Third, on July 7, staff from the Office of Policy and Management Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division (OPM CJPPD) delivered a presentation to the subcommittee containing an update on the Equity Dashboard, a JJPOC project that was recommended by IOYouth Task Force. The dashboard will use juvenile justice administrative and publicly available data to monitor and compare system involvement for youth of different races and ethnicities. Within the JJPOC, the dashboard will inform the RED Work Group’s efforts to inform ongoing system improvements. OPM CJPPD staff updated the subcommittee on the dashboard design and technical implementation. While OPM is expected to host the dashboard on

its website, the technical implementation is a collaborative effort among the Connecticut Judicial Branch, which administers most parts of the juvenile justice and therefore manages most of the data, and the OPM Data and Policy Analytics Unit. Moreover, the JJPOC is coordinating the ongoing implementation work on the dashboard. When the dashboard is completed, it will provide valuable analysis and information to the CREPH.

The subcommittee expects to receive one more presentation – from The Transitions Clinic, a primary care clinic for individuals recently released from prison and jail who are living with chronic health conditions as well as substance use disorder — that is in the process of being scheduled.

The subcommittee expects to concentrate its remaining work on developing:

- (1) A summary of the subcommittee’s meetings and presentations,
- (2) A list of data sources and publications involving disparities in the juvenile and criminal justice systems discussed within the subcommittee, and
- (3) Recommendations of priorities to include in the CREPH’s strategic plan.

### *Public Health*

The Public Health Subcommittee has determined their metrics. The first metric they plan to research further is access, both financial and logistical. They plan to hear from Access Health, OHS, DSS and Community Health Network of CT on this topic in the coming months.

### *Structural Racism in State Hiring*

The Structural Racism in State Hiring Subcommittee will be meeting soon. One of their immediate focuses is to engage with DAS as they undertake a new equity study.

### *Zoning*

The Zoning Subcommittee has been meeting regularly and inviting guest presenters to learn more about their efforts in the housing and zoning fields. They recently met with the CT Housing Finance Authority, will be meeting with Desegregate CT at their next meeting, and plan to meet with the COGS and a UConn Professor focused on environmental health later this summer.

### **Updates from the Co-Chairs**

Everette shared that she is departing Health Equity Solutions (HES) for another job opportunity out of state. She thanked members for their service and commitment to the Commission. HES Deputy Director Ayesha Clarke will be stepping in as the co-chair.

### **Good of the Order**

There was no Good of the Order.

### **Next Steps & Adjournment**

Everette adjourned the meeting at 9:39 AM.