



COMMISSION ON RACIAL EQUITY IN PUBLIC HEALTH

CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Co-Chair: Ayesha Clarke, Executive Director, Health Equity Solutions

Full Commission Meeting

Thursday, June 6, 2024

10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Hybrid Meeting

Members Present: Co-Chair Ayesha Clarke (HES), Dr. Douglas Brugge (UConn Health), Carline Charmelus (PSC), Dr. Robert Cotto (Trinity), Chavon Hamilton-Burgess (racial equity nonprofit rep), Dr. Faryal Mirza (UConn Health), Dr. Anuli Njoku (SCSU), Patricia O'Rourke (Sentencing Commission), Dr. Melissa Santos (CCMC),

Commission Staff Present: Pareesa Charmchi Goodwin, Muna Abbas

Members Absent: Tiffany Donelson (CHF), Leonard Jahad (violence intervention rep)

Opening Remarks from the Co-Chair

Co-chair Clarke called the meeting to order at 10:06am.

Muna Abbas, CREPH Associate Commission Analyst, called the roll.

Introductions for Newly Appointed Members

Patricia O'Rourke is a Research Associate at the Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy, University of Connecticut. She is particularly focused on mental health in the criminal justice system.

Meeting Minutes Approval

Motion to accept February 2024 minutes made by Douglas Brugge and seconded by Chavon Hamilton-Burgess.

Voice vote to approve February 2024 meeting minutes. No nays or abstentions. Minutes approved.

Session Update(s)

Advisory Body Members and CREPH staff provided updates from the 2024 legislative session:

- a) ACA Muna Abbas shared information about two proposed bills (SB 414 and SB 433) which would have implemented recommendations from the *Dismantling Structural Racism Within Connecticut State Government* report and potential Executive Branch action on the

recommendations.

- b) ED Charmchi Goodwin spoke about the Commission's involvement on responding to bills on insurance equity and medical debt. The Commission supported the passage of SB 395 on the reporting of medical debt which passed and has been signed by the Governor.
- c) Co-Chair Clarke provided updates on bills that HES advocated for, including SB 395 and HB 5320 AAC Hospital Financial Assistance. HB 5320 passed out of the House but was not called in the Senate.
- d) O'Rourke shared about criminal justice reforms which the Sentencing Commission hoped to advance but unfortunately did not.
- e) Hamilton-Burgess spoke about plans to create a mechanism to increase capacity for community involvement in policy work.

Advisory Body Survey Follow-up and Subcommittees Update

ED Charmchi Goodwin explained how Commission staff sent out a survey to Advisory Body members asking how they would like to engage in Commission activities, including chairing subcommittees to support our strategic planning with HDI. The Commission will be bringing back the five subcommittees: Health and Wellbeing; Housing, Environment, and Communities; Education and Economic Security; Community Engagement; and Criminal Justice. The Commission has also invited members of state agencies, content experts, people who do direct service work, and those with lived experiences to join the subcommittees.

Brugge asked when Advisory Body members will be informed about the subcommittee memberships. ED Charmchi Goodwin responded that Commission staff and subcommittee chairs will be contacting members soon to inform them about the subcommittee memberships.

Community-Based Participatory Research and Strategic Planning Presentation

The Commission contracted with UConn's Health Disparities Institute (HDI) to develop a strategic plan and conduct community engagement. The HDI team presented about the community-based participatory research they are conducting, including hiring a team of Community Research Advisors and Community Faculty. This team will help gather and disseminate data and information to and from the community as HDI puts together a strategic plan. The Commission's subcommittees will give feedback and help inform the final strategic plan.

The presentation was delivered by:

- Linda Sprague Martinez, PhD, Director of UConn Health Disparities Institute and Professor of Medicine and Public Health Sciences;
- Peter Zapata, MPH, CHES, Research Assistant 2; and
- Emil Coman, PhD, Assistant Professor in Residence of Public Health Sciences.

Discussion and questions followed from Brugge, ED Charmchi Goodwin, and Co-chair Clarke.

Public Comments

- None

Good of the Order

- ED Charmchi Goodwin shared that she will be going on maternity leave, will be back February 2025. CREPH staff will be points of contact for the Commission.
- Next Commission Meeting: Thursday, September 5, 2024, 10am-11:30am.
- Charmelus asked about opportunities to meet with the Community Research Advisors. Sprague Martinez responded that they would try to make that happen.

Adjournment

Co-chair Clarke asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:51am. Charmelus motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by O'Rourke. The meeting was adjourned with a unanimous voice vote.