



COMMISSION ON RACIAL EQUITY IN PUBLIC HEALTH

CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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

Full Commission Meeting

Thursday, September 5, 2024

10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Hybrid Meeting

Members Present¹: Co-Chair Ayesha Clarke (HES), Dr. Douglas Brugge (UConn Health), Carline Charmelus (PSC), Tiffany Donelson (CHF), Chavon Hamilton-Burgess* (HHI), Leonard Jahad* (CVIP), Barbara Lopez (Make the Road), Dr. Faryal Mirza* (UConn Health), Dr. Anuli Njoku (SCSU), Dr. Anthony Santella (Fairfield University), Dr. Melissa Santos (CCMC)

Commission Staff Present: Muna Abbas, Gretchen Shugarts

Members Absent: Dr. Robert Cotto (Trinity College), Dr. Patricia O'Rourke (IMRP)

Opening Remarks from the Co-Chair

Co-chair Clarke called the meeting to order at 10:01 am.

Introductions for Newly Appointed Members

Dr. Anthony Santella is the Public Health Program Director at Fairfield University. Area of expertise is sexual health, LGBTQ health, HIV, STIs, and Hepatitis C.

Roll Call

Gretchen Shugarts, Commission Analyst, called the roll. Quorum established.

Meeting Minutes Approval

Motion to accept June 2024 minutes made by Carline Charmelus and seconded by Douglas Brugge.

Voice vote to approve June 2024 meeting minutes. No nays. Abstentions include Tiffany Donelson, Barbara Lopez, and Anthony Santella. Minutes approved.

CREPH Updates

- Co-chair Clarke announced that Executive Director Charmchi Goodwin is not present because she is currently out on maternity leave.
- Muna Abbas, Associate Commission Analyst, announced that the Governor has signed Executive Order 24-2 that implements many of the recommendations from the *Dismantling Structural*

¹ An asterisk (*) indicates arrival after roll call

Racism Within Connecticut State Government report. The order creates a Chief Equity and Opportunity Officer for the state.

Health Disparities Institute (HDI) Update

Dr. Linda Sprague Martinez, Director of HDI, provided a brief recap and update on the community-based participatory research and strategic planning project HDI is engaged in with CREPH.

Valen Diaz, Project Director

- Introduced the Community Research Team (CRT) which includes the Community Research Advisors (CRAs), Community Faculty (CF), and HDI team members
- Overview of the CBPR process included:
 - Training and focus group planning
 - CRT analyzed results of short survey developed by CREPH
 - CRT determined priority areas for further exploration
 - CRT explored focus group strategy and implementation
 - Areas for further exploration include:
 - Healthcare access/mental health
 - Employment, income, education
 - Living environment, climate, safety (housing as a subcategory)
 - Regional team members provided an overview of who they plan to engage for focus groups and why
 - Bridgeport & New Haven (*Armando Jimenez*)
 - Hartford (*Pastor Andre L. McGuire & Teth Pickens*)
 - Norwich/New London & Willimantic/Windham (*Stephanie Lazarus*)
- Next Steps
 - Conduct Focus Groups
 - Bring pertinent information to subcommittee meetings

Discussion and questions followed from Charmelus, Donelson, Diaz, Sprague-Martinez, Brugge, and Santella.

Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Presentation

Edith Pestana, EJ Program Administrator for DEEP's Office of Equity and Environmental Justice

- Environmental Justice Communities
- Affecting facilities
- EJ affecting facilities map – Online tool that provides data on affecting facilities, demographics, etc. by town

Sarah Huang, Director of the Office of Equity and Environmental Justice

- Cumulative Impacts
 - Defined as the totality of exposures to chemical and nonchemical stressors and their effects on health, wellbeing, and quality of life
 - Take into account health, environment, and socioeconomic factors
 - Taking cumulative impacts into consideration for permitting can reveal priority areas for protection and can redress historical wrongs
 - MA, NJ, CO states have adopted similar cumulative impact statutes and developing regulations. NY, MN, WA are in the process of developing something similar.
 - Interest in Cumulative Impacts at the federal level

- SB 1147/PA 23-202 amended existing EJ statute
 - Identification and measurement of public health stressors' relative impacts
 - Tools for stakeholder industries and sectors
 - Standards for placing conditions on permits or denying permits
- Pollution sources such as incinerators, landfills, recycling facilities, lead to chronic health conditions such as asthma, coronary heart disease, diabetes, low birthweight
- CT Environmental Justice Tools available online include:
 - EJ Communities Map
 - EJ Screening Tool
 - Cumulative Impacts Tool (To be developed – Request for Proposals has been released)

Eliza Heins, Staff Attorney

- Provided an overview of existing EJ laws and compared them to CT's EJ law
 - Colorado
 - Massachusetts
 - New Jersey
- Announced upcoming workshops where they will discuss rulemaking and cumulative impacts
- Seeking comment/feedback from community members, industry members, etc.

Brugge noted that DEEP's environmental justice metric missed the most significant environmental exposure in CT which is local traffic pollution. Given his research and expertise, he has concerns that their EJ metric will miss a very important aspect of exposure for residents.

More questions and discussion followed from Brugge, Donelson, and Clarke.

Public Comments

- None

Good of the Order

- Co-chair Clarke reminded the Advisory Body to continue to monitor email for subcommittee updates.

Adjournment

Co-chair Clarke asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Brugge motioned to adjourn, seconded by Donelson. The meeting was adjourned at 11:11 am with a unanimous voice vote.