



COMMISSION ON RACIAL EQUITY IN PUBLIC HEALTH

CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

December 2023 Report to the Connecticut General Assembly’s Public Health and Appropriations Committees and to the Office of Policy and Management

Commission Activities July – December 2023

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Criminal Justice Data

Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division (CSSD)

The Commission previously requested and received raw data from the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) of the Judicial Branch on the following metrics: the number of arrests and population on probation for adults and juveniles, the adult population on post-release supervision, and the juvenile population receiving residential services. The Commission staff cleaned and analyzed the raw data, worked with CSSD on plain language definitions for the report, and released the metric report in December 2023. The [report](#) is available on the CREPH website.

Structural Racism Report & Symposium

Pursuant to C.G.S. § 19a-133c, CREPH completed a structural racism report with recommendations on how to reduce race-based inequities in state government. The report offers practical steps to address structural racism sourced from practices currently being implemented in the federal government, Oregon, and within certain Connecticut government agencies. The [report](#), titled Dismantling Structural Racism within Connecticut State Government, was released December 2023 and is available on the CREPH website.

CREPH and the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) partnered to organize a full-day symposium highlighting the recommendations from CREPH's report and CHRO's Equity Study. The symposium will take place on Friday, January 19th, 2024, in the State Capitol. The keynote speakers are U.S. Office of Personnel Management Director Kiran Ahuja, Connecticut's Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson, and Department of Children and Families Commissioner Vanessa Dorantes.

Community Engagement & Strategic Planning

The Commission submitted a Request for Proposals (RFP) in July 2023. The goal of the RFP was to identify a consultant to assist with the Commission's community engagement activities and strategic plan development. The RFP called for a community-based participatory research approach and the use of focus groups and surveys for identifying the specific systems changes Connecticut residents need to achieve better health. The findings will inform the Commission's strategic plan.

The RFP Evaluation Committee members were Executive Director Charmchi Goodwin, CREPH staff members Muna Abbas and Gretchen Shugarts (Marin), and Director of Health Equity at Access Health CT /CREPH Community Engagement Advisor, Tammy Hendricks. The review committee scored all proposals and voted unanimously on the selected awardee. The contract is under review and can be made public following its execution, expected in February 2024.

In addition, the Commission staff and community engagement advisors worked with Access Health CT to develop a short survey for possible dissemination through Access Health CT. The goal of this survey is to collect residents' perspectives on their needs, key concerns, and stance on proposed solutions for addressing barriers to achieving health. The survey could serve as another source of data to inform the Commission's community engagement and strategic planning efforts.

Advisory Body Appointments

The 2023 Legislative Session brought changes¹ to the statute governing the Commission. The changes pertain to the commission advisory body appointees. The present roster of appointed advisory body members is provided in the chart below.

No.	Auth	Appointer	Specific Qualifications	Appointee
1	SPRO	Looney, Martin M	a health disparities expert affiliated with an academic research institution and shall serve as cochairperson	Vacant
2	SPRO	Looney, Martin M	a representative of a violence intervention program using a health-based approach to examine individuals post-incarceration and policies for integration	Jahad, Leonard
3	SPRO	Looney, Martin M	a representative of a philanthropic entity that focuses on racial equity	Donelson, Tiffany
4	SPKH	Ritter, Matthew	a representative of a nonprofit organization that focuses on health policy and racial equity issues and shall serve as cochairperson	Clarke, Ayesha
5	SPKH	Ritter, Matthew	a representative of a nonprofit organization that focuses on racial equity and community engagement	Hamilton-Burgess, Chavon
6	SPKH	Ritter, Matthew	an expert in immigration policy and law	Vacant
7	SMAJ	Duff, Bob	a representative of a nonprofit that focuses on equitable housing policy	Vacant
8	SMAJ	Duff, Bob	a medical professional with expertise in diversity, equity and inclusion policy	Santos, Melissa
9	HMAJ	Rojas, Jason	a representative of a nonpartisan criminal justice policy and research entity	Vacant
10	HMAJ	Rojas, Jason	a biostatistician or epidemiologist with knowledge of the effects of social-structural factors on health	Vacant
11	SMIN	Kelly, Kevin	a public health educator or researcher affiliated with an academic institution	Vacant
12	SMIN	Kelly, Kevin	a current or former educator, school counselor or school nurse with public policy experience	Vacant

¹ Sections 188-190 of [Public Act 23-204](#) made changes to C.G.S. § 19a-133a

13	HMIN	Clarke, Ayesha ²	an expert in environmental impacts on human health who is affiliated with an academic institution	Brugge, Douglas
14	HMIN	Candelora, Vincent J	a representative of a nonprofit that focuses on economic research and policy	Charmelus, Carline
15	BPRC CHR	Miller, Patricia Billie	an education policy researcher affiliated with an academic research institution	Cotto, Robert

Commission Meetings

August 28, 2023 – Regular Meeting

A virtual transitional meeting was held where the Commission provided an update on legislative changes to the CREPH enabling statute. The Commission also provided updates on the Structural Racism report and the community engagement/strategic planning RFP process.

October 23, 2023 – Regular Meeting (Cancelled)

This meeting was cancelled due to insufficient commission appointments to reach quorum.

December 18, 2023 – Regular Meeting

A virtual meeting was held where the Commission welcomed new advisory body members. Co-chair Clarke discussed the purpose of the Commission: racial/ethnic inequity data reporting, community engagement, and providing policy analysis and recommendations to the legislature. She elaborated on the goals of the Commission to further health equity and lessen the impact of racism on public health outcomes.

Following the remarks of the co-chair, Executive Director Charmchi Goodwin provided an overview of the work of the commission during the past year. She discussed the completed data report and data gallery event. Gretchen Shugarts (Marin), Commission Analyst, provided a brief overview of some of the data from the previously released data report along with updates as to the release of additional criminal justice involvement data. Muna Abbas, Associate Commission Analyst, discussed the summary of recommendations from the Dismantling Structural Racism within Connecticut State Government report, and shared details on the upcoming symposium. Director Charmchi Goodwin concluded with an update on the Commission's pending contract for community engagement and strategic plan development.

² Pursuant to Public Act No. 23-204 Sec. 197(b)(5) and Sec. 197 (d) Chairs may appoint qualified individuals after a 60-day vacancy period. This designation holds until a successor is appointed pursuant to PA 23-204 Sec. 197(b)(5).

2024 Commission Meetings

Regular Commission meetings are scheduled for 10:00am-11:30am on the first Thursday of February, June, September, and December.

2024 meeting dates:

- February 1st
- June 6th
- September 5th
- December 5th