



COMMISSION ON RACIAL EQUITY IN PUBLIC HEALTH

CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Co-Chair: Ayesha Clarke, Executive Director, Health Equity Solutions
Co-Chair: Kristina Talbert-Slagle, Assistant Professor, Yale School of Medicine

Full Commission Meeting

Thursday, March 12, 2026

10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Hybrid Meeting

Members Present: Co-Chairs Ayesha R. Clarke (HES) & Kristina Talbert Slagle (Yale), Dr. Douglas Brugge (UConn Health), Carline Charmelus (PSC), Chavon Hamilton-Burgess (HHI), Barbara López (Make the Road), Dr. Anuli Njoku (SCSU), Dr. Anthony Santella (Fairfield University), Dr. Melissa Santos (CCMC)

Commission Staff Present: Pareesa Charmchi Goodwin, Muna Abbas, Gretchen Shugarts, Nancy Becerra-Cordoba, Stephanie Gendron

Members Absent: Dr. Robert Cotto (Trinity College), Kevin Collins (CHF), Leonard Jahad (CVIP), Dr. Faryal Mirza (UConn Health), Dr. Patricia O'Rourke (CT Appleseed Center),

Opening Remarks

- **Co-Chair Talbert Slagle** called the meeting to order and introduced new Commission Analyst, Stephanie Gendron.

Roll Call

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

Meeting Minutes Approval

Motion to accept December 2025 minutes made by Douglas Brugge and seconded by Barbara López. No discussion, nays, or abstentions. Minutes approved.

Racial Ethnic Impact Statement Updates

Dr. Nancy Becerra-Cordoba, Principal Analyst

- REIS working group convened in December where drafts of REIS process, contents, and forms for the pilot were discussed.
- The pilot has been launched this session and five requests have been submitted to date.
- Drop-in sessions for legislators have been hosted.
- Expect to further refine the process and reconvene the working group after session.

Discussion on REIS process and legislator interest ensued.

Legislative Updates

Gretchen Shugarts, *Commission Analyst* – testimony submitted on the following:

- HB 5127 *An Act Concerning Medical Credit Cards* – In Support
- HB 5169 *An Act Requiring the Establishment of An Alert in the Statewide Health Information Exchange Regarding Patients with a History of Violence of Combative Behavior Toward a Healthcare Provider* – In Support with language change recommendations
- HB 5378 *An Act Concerning Multiple Employer Welfare Arrangements & Requiring a Study of the Feasibility of Establishing the Connecticut Option Program* – In Opposition (testified in-person and in writing)
- SB 401 *An Act Concerning a Bridge Program to Allow Access to Food, Housing and Health Care Benefits* – Testimony currently being drafted and will likely be in support of the bill.

Muna Abbas, *Associate Commission Analyst* – testimony submitted on the following:

- SB 265 *An Act Concerning Additional Funding for the Care 4 Kids Program and Certain Child Care Providers* – In Support
- SB 266 *An Act Limiting the Access of Private Equity to Funds from the Early Childhood Education Endowment* – In Support
- SB 3 *An Act Concerning Health Care Affordability* – Anticipate supporting sections of the bill, specifically those addressing a Health Care Affordability Trust Fund, Hospital Financial Assistance, establishing a Basic Health Program, and a plan and implement provision for a Connecticut Option.

Q&A:

- **Ayesha Clarke** – What are ways the advisory body can support the Commission’s legislative efforts? Abbas indicated more voices and different lenses are always helpful, as well as organizations having continued conversations with legislators.

Healthcare Planning Workgroup Update

ED Charmchi Goodwin:

- Healthcare modeling update
 - Review of different options: Basic Health Plan and two variations of a Connecticut Option (including the Governor’s version as well as another version perhaps tied to subsidies, narrower networks, or potential Medicaid buy-in)
 - Funding provided by Connecticut Project to Urban Institute for modeling
 - Urban Institute will run a simulation model that will examine the impacts of the different policy options on coverage, affordability, and equity (specifically by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status)
 - BHP modeling will be prioritized given legislation proposed this session
 - Two other options will be modeled after legislative session
 - Funding provided by Connecticut Health Foundation to Urban Institute for a national landscape analysis to examine what other states have done to address healthcare affordability
 - Thanked SHVS, Robert Wood Foundation, and other technical assistance providers Karen Siegel of Health Equity Solutions and Sabrina Corlette of Georgetown University’s Center for Health Insurance Reform for assistance with policy development.

Q&A:

- **Clarke** requested more detail on the work being done by Urban Institute. Charmchi Goodwin provided clarity on different health care options being considered and goals of the landscape analysis.

- **Douglas Brugge** asked about public awareness and involvement in policy development discussions. Karen Siegel of Health Equity Solutions (HES) discussed the advocacy efforts within the Health Justice Now campaign that includes a robust stakeholder engagement project.
- **Talbert Slagle** brought up health care costs and cost containment strategies.
- **Chavon Hamilton Burgess** asked about how updates will be shared. Charmchi Goodwin recommended reaching out to HES, Universal Health Foundation, or CCAG to stay updated from an advocacy perspective. From a Commission perspective, Abbas stated that updates will be provided via email and commission meetings. Abbas is happy to provide more regular updates to anyone requesting them.
- **Clarke & Siegel** provided additional information on their advocacy efforts and provided their contact information for those interested in staying connected regarding upcoming events.

Strategic Planning Update

- **Dr. Sprague Martinez** of Health Disparities Institute (HDI) provided updates regarding the Strategic Plan Dissemination Team which include:
 - Four Community Dissemination Champions tasked with developing content for a toolkit
 - Next steps include translation and graphic design of materials
 - Other community engagement activities include: op-eds; a leadership roundtable in collaboration with HES; presentations at the Connecticut Public Health Association annual meeting, community forums, in addition to a lunch and learn event
 - Upcoming meeting to address youth engagement

Public Comments

- None

Good of the Order

- Co-Chair Clarke announced today is ED Charmchi Goodwin's last day and thanked her for the remarkable work. Co-chair Talbert Slagle and other Advisory Body members echoed Clarke's remarks and wished her well.
- Charmchi Goodwin expressed gratitude to all.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:12 am.