



The Commission on
Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity

CWCSEO

Connecticut General Assembly

**MINUTES
CWCSEO ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2020
VIA ZOOM**

PRESENT: Karen Jarmoc, Alan Tan, Peggy Young, Diane Stone, Denise Cesario, Leticia Colon de Mejias, Michael Ji Tong, Mui Mui Hin-McCormick, Umesh Vig Kunwar, Tiheba Williams-Bain, Jordan Grossman, Nancy Heaton and Alphonse Wright

STAFF/INTERNS PRESENT: Steven Hernández, Werner Oyanadel, Rosemary Lopez, Denise Drummond, Lucy Goeicochea-Hernandez

GUEST: Jill Zorn, Senior Program Officer, Universal Healthcare Foundation of Connecticut & Miriam Miller, Legislative Liaison and Health Policy Associate, State Comptrollers Office
Tina Courpas, Executive Director, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women in CT

Meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM on Thursday, November 12, 2020.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Co-Chairperson Jarmoc and Co-Chairperson Tan welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending this meeting via zoom

PRESENTATIONS FROM GUEST

Both Ms. Zorn and Ms. Miller presented on Public Options Campaign, the campaign is to see how they can get more people in Connecticut to have healthcare.

There is a health care crisis: Cost

- Affordability challenges for individuals
 - Premiums
 - Deductibles
 - Co-pays, co-insurance
- High deductible health plans



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- Rising prescription drug prices
- Hospitals
 - Consolidation
 - Rising prices

A survey in the middle of COVID was conducted because they wanted to know how people were feeling with this crisis of cost.

- 51% experienced a problem affording health care in the past year
- 24% had difficulty paying medical bills
- 24% delayed or avoided going to the doctor to get care because of worries about cost
- 19% reported either cutting pills in half, skipping doses, or not filling a prescription at all.

Another mayor issue is the continuing and really widening gap in how different people in our state experience health and health care (Racial and Ethnic Disparities).

- People of color
 - More likely to be uninsured
 - More likely to die early or suffer from preventable illness
 - Live with higher rates of chronic stress, chronic disease, maternal mortality, and low infant birth weight
 - Undocumented immigrants have the highest uninsured rate in Connecticut

Health Care Crisis: COVID 19

- Historic levels of unemployment
- Small businesses closing
- 30% increase in number of uninsured
- Higher rates of cases and deaths among Black and Latinx people
- 54% worried about affording COVID-19 treatment
- Underinvestment in public health infrastructure
- Underinvestment in combatting the social determinants of health

Since 2019 a group of advocates and legislators along with the Comptrollers office have been working together to try to see how they could address these problems. The Mission is to build on successful government programs and practices to ensure every person in Connecticut has equitable access to affordable, quality health care. The vision is that all people in Connecticut have equitable access to affordable, quality healthcare.

The goals are:



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- to improve affordability and quality of health insurance options in the employer-based and individual markets
- Advance health equity by increasing access to health coverage and care
- Increase the rate of insured people in Connecticut
- Increase the number of people who can access quality care because it is affordable to them.

This crisis demands urgent action that meets the moments. Quality health care in Connecticut must be affordable and available to everyone. We must ease the financial burden on working families by lowering health care costs. Grow the economy by leveling the playing field for small businesses and nonprofits. Address racial inequities by expanding access to quality, affordable health care. Provide new health care options by leveraging the market power of the state health plan. Build on the success of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and defend its protections. Improve public health and guard against future crises by providing health care people can use.

Ms. Courpas presented on their current initiative which they were thrilled to share with us, as part of their COVID response, they have created a statewide data collection initiative to really assess the economic impact of COVID-19 on Connecticut's women.

- Hard data survey: Impact by the numbers
 - 30 question written survey takes 5 minutes to complete in English and Spanish
 - Disseminated broadly through women's service, professional, legislative, non-profit, business, and other channels
 - Goal is to reach large and wide cross-section of Connecticut's women
- 8 Zoom forums in each CT county: Tell Your Story
 - Input directly from CT's women on COVID-19's impact on their economic security
 - Public Zoom Forums from 7pm – 8pm
 - Mon., Nov. 16th: Tolland and Windham Counties
 - Tues., Nov. 17th: New London County
 - Wed., Nov. 18th: New Haven and Middlesex Counties
 - Wed., Dec. 2nd: Hartford and Litchfield Counties
 - Thurs., Dec. 3rd: Fairfield County
- Final report: First quarter of 2021

They are pushing to have a broad and diverse group of women taking the survey, by race, age, location, state socioeconomic and educational level. There are many ways to take the survey; website access, printable, QR code, available in English and Spanish.



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SUB COMMISSION LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Asian and Pacific Islanders Sub Commission – Interim Chair Ms. Hin-McCormick reported that they met, and their priorities are:

1. Language Access
2. Health and Wellness Access
3. API Curriculum
4. Data Disaggregation
5. Supporting API Business in economic development Curriculum

APPROVAL OF LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2021

ACTION ITEM 11-20-1

Commissioner Heaton made a motion to approve the legislative priorities as discussed in this meeting and last month meeting with caveat of leave for the staff to incorporate any minor changes. Commissioner Wright seconded the motion.

OTHER & NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Stone announced that along with the Connecticut Association of Senior Center personnel and the Connecticut Healthy Living Collective and with funding from AARP, they will be doing a statewide holiday batch for senior centers around the state on December 8, 2020. They have 63 centers in Connecticut participating, anticipating over 2,000 participants.

Upcoming Information conversations via Zoom with our communities:

- Aging in the Community in Connecticut: What has changed because of COVID – Monday, November 23rd, 2020, at 3:30pm
- COVID-19 Impact on the Connecticut Latino Community – Tuesday, November 24th, 2020, at 5:30pm
- Informational Forum on Protecting Children from Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting in Connecticut – Monday, December 7th, 2020, at 10am
- The Economic Impact of COVID-19 on CT's Women – December 8th, 2020, at 2:00pm



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ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Jarmoc moved to adjourn the meeting of November 12, 2020, at 12:00pm.
Seconded by Commissioner Young.