

**State Health Commissioner's Advisory Council on Health Disparity and Health Equity (ACHDHE)
July 12, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

**James Monroe Building
101 N. 14 Street, Richmond, VA 23219
Main Conference Room (In-person and Televised Meeting) – 11:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.**

Attended In-person: **Colin Greene, MD, MPH; Kathryn Crosby, MBA; Sandra Serna, MPH, Nia Harrison, MPP; Linda Lee Redmond, PhD; Antonio Villa, MD, MPH; Carolyn C. Turner, MS; Elvira De La Cruz, BS; Patti Kiger, M. Ed; Zakia McKensey; George Worthington, MS;**

Virtual Attendance (Local Health Dept.):
Gordon Walker, MS; Melody Armstrong, MPA, BSN; Bonny K. Dillon, PhD, BCPC, LPC;

Virtual Attendance (non-Local Health Dept.):
Eleanor Woodson, BSN, RN; Kate S. K. Bradshaw, Ph.D., FACHE, CPHQ;

Did Not Attend:
J. Elisha Burke, M. Div., D. Min.; Maceo E. Freeman, D. Min; Radhika Thirunagari, MS; Daud Mohamed; Lauren Powell, Ph.D, MPA; Lean Abdelaziz, BA; Keisha L. Smith, MPA; Barbara Board, PhD; JohnJason Cecil, BA; Lauren James, MD;

VDH Staff: **Augustine Doe, MS, MPA; Janaye Oliver, MPH; Rebecca Vargas-Jackson, M.D.:**

WELCOME

Ms. Nia Harrison, ACHDHE Chair, introduced herself and welcomed the attendees. She then called the meeting to order asking the State Health Commissioner and ACHDHE members to introduce themselves.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Ms. Harrison provided an overview of the meeting agenda and asked if members had any suggested changes.

Meeting Agenda:

<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/76/2022/07/ACHDHE-July-12-2022-Meeting-Agenda.pdf>

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The April 12, 2022 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Minutes:

<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/76/2022/07/ACHDHE-April-12-2022-Draft-Minutes-NH-Edits-1.pdf>

ACHDHE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSIONER

Ms. Nia Harrison, ACHDHE Chair read the ACHDHE recommendation document from the April 12, 2022 meeting presentations to the State Health Commissioner, Dr. Colin Greene.

STATE HEALTH COMMISSIONER UPDATES:

- Prior to providing his updates, Dr. Colin Greene, State Health Commissioner recollected several valuable and fascinating presentations made at the April meeting regarding underserved and marginalized communities. Assisting these communities is crucial in achieving the agency's mission and vision, Dr. Greene told the members. He then shared the following updates about COVID-19:

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- Dr. Greene shared that VDH is seeing a persistent level of new cases, about 2,500 to 3,000 per day of COVID 19 in Virginia, one-sixth of the level of peak in January 2022. Although not a high level, it is a persistent level, which is driven probably by the new variant, BA5. The agency is closely following the trend.

- In the last month, the rate of hospitalizations has been in the 500 to 700 beds per day and with eight to ten COVID-19 fatalities per day. The rate is up from three to five deaths in the previous months. Again, the rate is about one-sixth the level of deaths per day compared to January and February 2022. There is the likelihood that somebody who catches COVID ending up in the hospital has dropped substantially and logically reflects the rising background level of immunity of which between vaccinations and natural immunities is likely above 90 percent. Although the current number of hospitalizations has dropped substantially compared to 2020, Omicron is still an issue, Dr. Greene concluded.
 - <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/see-the-numbers/covid-19-in-virginia/covid-19-in-virginia-cases/>
 - <https://www.vhha.com/communications/virginia-hospital-covid-19-data-dashboard/>
 - <https://www.mayoclinic.org/coronavirus-covid-19/map/virginia>

- Disparity continues to exist, particularly in the African American community, as well as the rural communities regardless of the racial makeup of those rural communities. These groups and communities have suffered inordinately relative to everybody else particularly in the number of deaths. While we address COVID-19 in Virginia, there are other critical issues relevant to health disparities that we cannot forget, Dr. Greene shared. For more health disparity information, see the links below.
 - <https://apps.vdh.virginia.gov/omhhe/hoi/what-is-the-hoi>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/factsheets/research-in-rural-communities.htm>

ACHDHE Member's Question:

Ms. Harrison asked for an update on Dr. Greene's intent to set up an investigative unit, as reported in the news, to research factors that cause health disparities including maternal mortality rates. Dr. Greene said that the Office of Family Health Services is heavily involved with addressing the high infant mortality rate. However, it is understood to be widespread, and not specific to Virginia and unfortunately not specific even to the United States. Our approach is identifying the long-term root causes for the best interventions. However, VDH is also looking at proximate causes to make health improvements. Ms. Harrison cautioned against using the state's limited resources to identify well-known causes like racism rather than advance solutions.

PRESENTATIONS:

- **Topic: "COVID-19 Best Practices & Lessons Learned"**
Presenters: Lance Gregory, Office of Environmental Health Services, VDH
Presentation link:
<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/76/2022/04/DEI.pdf>

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Virginia Mercury Article following the Office of Environmental Health Services program presentation:

<https://www.virginiamercury.com/2022/07/13/virginia-health-officials-seeing-unprecedented-demand-for-well-and-septic-repair-program/>

- **Topic: "COVID-19 Best Practices & Lessons Learned"**
Presenters: Amy **Popovich**, Nurse Manager and Jackie **Lawrence**, Director of Health Equity, Richmond City and Henrico County Health Department, VDH
Presentation link:
<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/76/2022/07/RHHD-Health-Equity-Presentation-July-2022.pptx-1.pdf>
- **Topic: "Health Challenges in the Disability Community"**
Presenters: Nia **Harrison**, Virginia Board for People with Disabilities
Presentation link:
<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/76/2022/07/NIA-ACHDHE-Presentation-7.12.22-reduced-file-size.pdf>
- **Topic: "OHE Mental Health Incentives Program Overview"**
Presenter: Dr. Elisha **Heather Anderson**, Director, Division of Primary Care and Rural Health, VDH
Presentation link:
https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/76/2022/07/VA-BHLRP-ACHDHE-7_12.pdf

UPDATES:

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

Ms. Kathryn Crosby did not present updates. However, she did introduce Ms. Sandra Serna as the new Director for the Office of Health Equity, VDH.

Office of Health Equity (OHE) Updates

Ms. Sandra Serna, Director, Office of Health Equity introduced herself, thanked the members for advancing health equity in Virginia, and shared the following comments:

- Although a new member to the VDH team, Ms. Serna noted the professionalism of the staff and the need to make Virginia the healthiest state by addressing the underlying structural and historical barriers that prevent the attainment of health equity.
- Ms. Serna explained how the divisions in the office are integrated, both individually and collectively contributing to the creation of opportunities for healthy Virginia communities.
- She concluded by praising the work of the local health districts (LHDs). Ms. Serna encouraged the utilization of the Office of Health Equity staff expertise as consultants for the enhancement of the work at the LHDs.

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ACHDHE Members’ Updates:

Nia Harrison, Virginia’s Board for People with Disabilities

- Ms. Nia Harrison, ACHDHE Chair shared that the Virginia’s Board for People with Disability annually assesses two areas of policy that relate to people with disabilities. They compile a report which goes to the Governor’s Office and the organization advocates for those recommendations throughout the following year. This year’s topic areas include dental care and rural disparities that affect people with disabilities and community living. Feel free to share any resources or information with Ms. Harrison on these topics.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- A member of the public noted that the meeting presentations mentioned several important social determinants of health including transportation and disability status. Another population group that is affected by health disparities is men and women who are currently incarcerated within Virginia Department of Corrections facilities. Their living conditions constitute a health issue. She called for the inclusion of this population in research and data collection efforts related to health disparities. She also cited the May 2022 report from Department of Corrections. See the link below for more information.
<https://vadoc.virginia.gov/media/1778/vadoc-monthly-offender-population-report-2022-05.pdf>

ADJOURNMENT:

The ACHDHE meeting was adjourned at 1:46 PM.

Next ACHDHE meeting: October 11, 2022.

Time: 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

October 11, 2022 meeting link: Coming soon

Host Site: James Monroe Building, 101 North 14 Street, 23219.

Kindly send your questions to augustine.doe@vdh.virginia.gov.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Augustine Doe, Division of Multicultural Health and Community Engagement (DMHCE)

Minutes Reviewed By:

Nia Harrison, Chair

JohnJason Cecil, Vice Chair