

**State Health Commissioner’s Advisory Council on Health Disparity and Health Equity  
(ACHDHE)**

**October 10, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

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

In person attendance: **Karen Shelton, MD; Sandra Serna, MPH; David C. Rose, MD, MBA, FAAP; Nia Harrison, MPP; Patti Kiger, M. Ed; Linda Lee Redmond, PhD; El Hadji Djibril Niang; Maceo E. Freeman, D.MIN; Carolyn C. Turner, MS; JohnJason Cecil, BA. Antonio Villa, MD, MPH; Amy Christine Hodge, M. Div.**

Virtual Attendees: **Barbara Board, PhD;**

Did Not Attend:

**George Worthington, MS; Elvira De La Cruz, BS; Zakia McKensey; Melody Armstrong, MPA, BSN; Eleanor Woodson, BSN, RN; Olugbenga O. Obasanjo, MBBS, Ph.D., MPH, MBA; Gordon Walker, MS; Kate S. K. Bradshaw, Ph.D., FACHE, CPHQ; Linnaya Graf, PhD, MCHES, CPH;**

VDH Staff: **Augustine Doe, MS, MPA;**

**WELCOME**

Dr. Rose, ACHDHE Chair, welcomed the attendees and called for introductions prior to calling the meeting to order.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Dr. Rose provided an overview of the meeting agenda and requested for amendments if members had any suggested changes. The agenda was adopted.

Meeting Agenda:

[Agenda](#)

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The July 11, 2023, meeting minutes were approved as presented.

[Minutes](#)

**ACHDHE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSIONER**

Dr. Rose presented the ACHDHE recommendation document from the July 11, 2023, meeting presentations to the State Health Commissioner, Dr. Karen Shelton.

[Recommendations](#)

**STATE HEALTH COMMISSIONER UPDATES:**

Dr. Karen Shelton, State Health Commissioner, thanked the members of the ACHDHE for their continued support of the council and shared her updates in these categories,

**General VDH Updates:**

Prior to her updates, Dr. Shelton outlined some of the key VDH priorities going forward: workforce development, maternal and child health, as well as addressing other public health areas.

**Workforce:**

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- While the focus of the agency is on the retention of its great staff, VDH is also committed to recruitment and staff wellness. During the pandemic, there was a lot of hard work done by the public health workforce. During this unprecedented time, some of the workforce departed state service, while a number sought other opportunities after the pandemic. However, a lot of new people joined VDH during the pandemic. Others came onboard through the Virginia Medical Reserve Corps program and contract opportunities. With COVID-19 behind us, how do we address our workforce's needs through wellness moving forward? Dr. Shelton recounted visits with a few health districts where she saw the good work of public health across the state.

**VDH Internship Academy:**

- VDH launched a new Internship Academy this summer. The current cohort is comprised of a little over 25 college students---selected from over 400 applicants from across the state---working within local health departments and central office. VDH is proud to provide oversight and hands-on training in ways that assist the interns in gaining first-hand public health knowledge and skills.
- VDH will soon commence a public health fellows' program that will focus on some of our leadership in the community. The program will help the participants learn to use the public health lens within the context of health in all policies as they go forward, both in local government and hopefully in other community leadership program areas.
- On a broader population health matter, Dr. Shelton shared that addressing maternal mortality is one of her key priorities. She recounted VDH's data on maternal health, maternal deaths, and infant mortality. Under her leadership, VDH is looking at existing programs, and how we can implement effective solutions in partnership with community resources, community health workers, home visits, and Virginia's neonatal and perinatal collaboration. Dr. Shelton is looking forward to reporting out in the future to let the group know more about the agency's maternal health strategies.

**Opioid crisis:**

- Since the opioid crisis declaration as a public health disaster in 2016, several agencies have joined the efforts, thereby expanding collaboration across professions and specialties. In addition to education and prevention, many initiatives have been developed to address the opioid crisis, including the Governor's [Executive Order 26](#), [Senate Bill 1415](#) and the Governor's [Right Help, Right Now](#) to help with behavioral health crises.
- Continued efforts aimed at addressing drug overdose include the creation of partnerships for the dissemination of information on the availability and accessibility of naloxone in communities. VDH is looking at best practices from COVID-19 surveillance systems to be adopted for drug use and overdose surveillance/monitoring. VDH is taking a comprehensive approach that includes the overdose incident management team, harm reduction, services for treatment and recovery, and peer review specialists with lived experiences.

**Language access & other VDH business:**

- VDH leadership is aware of the multiculturalism of its communities and is using a portion of a new CDC Infrastructure grant to address language access needs. VDH has hired both a Translation and Transcreation Manager and a Language Access Coordinator. Language access efforts will assist in addressing diverse public health program areas, including the TB initiative and maternal health, to ensure that Virginians have access to the resources that they need.
- VDH public health policy development is another ongoing initiative that may be of interest to the ACHDHE. VDH is looking to put forward public health issues we have that we would like to

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solve, and the best and most logical way to go about the steps to address those concerns. The goal would be to create policies that could go forward.

- In conclusion, Dr. Shelton thanked the ACHDHE and expressed interest in working with the April 2023 meeting recommendations. She expressed excitement about ACHDHE’s recent attention to behavioral health.

**PRESENTATIONS:**

- Presentation: “[Virginia Medical Reserve Corps](#),” by Michael **Magner**, State Volunteer Coordinator, VDH
- Presentation: “[VDH Overdose Incident Management Team](#),” by Robert (Bob) **Mauskapf**, Director, Office of Emergency Preparedness
- Presentation: “[VDH Injury and Violence Prevention Program](#),” by Justin **Wallace** and Tara **Keen**, Suicide Prevention Program, VDH

**New Business:**

ACHDHE members adopted the new ACHDHE onboarding process as reflected in the ACHDHE procedural guidelines, Addendum, pages 8-9.

**UPDATES:**

**Office of Health Equity (OHE) Updates**

Ms. Sandra Serna, Director Office of Health Equity, shared the following updates:

- The availability of the Division of Social Epidemiology, Office of Health Equity, Health Opportunity Index (HOI) will be posted later this month, July 2023. The HOI presents various social and economic factors that influence health outcomes across Virginia’s communities.
- Ms. Serna told the ACHDHE the OHE is involved with Right Help Right Now and is especially engaged on efforts to increase the behavioral health workforce. OHE is also a part of the Overdose Incident Management Team. She then encouraged the faith-based community and other community entities to reach out to OHE if they were interested in hosting or learning more about comprehensive harm reduction training events.
- Ms. Serna concluded with calls for collaboration on naloxone distribution, with particular attention to cultural considerations and the awareness of the stigmatization of intended population groups.

**ACHDHE Members’ Updates:**

- No update was provided.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Ms. Kimberly Dyke-Harsley, a community member, thanked the council members and the preceding speaker for their comments. She then shared the following comments:

- She recounted an ACHDHE member’s persistence in raising the issue from the previous meeting about stigma in the medical community. She highlighted how members can engage with the Board of Medicine, which is the body that would oversee any implicit bias trainings for clinicians, to further the awareness beyond the ACHDHE.

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- Ms. Dyke-Harsley recommended connecting with the [Virginia Community Health Workers Association](#) to explore how community health workers can be accessed by the State Volunteer Coordinator for inclusion in the Medical Reserve Corps program.
- Ms. Dyke-Harsley would like to know more about Virginia’s overdose data sets, particularly whether the current data constitutes overdose incidents involving incarcerated people in Virginia.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The ACHDHE meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.

**Weblinks to resources:**

- Executive order 26: <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorviriniagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/eo/EO-26-Crushing-the-Fentanyl-Epidemic-Strengthening-Virginia's-Interdiction-and-Enforcement-Response-to-Fentanyl-Crisis.pdf>
- 2023 Senate Bill 1415: <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?231+sum+SB1415&231+sum+SB1415>
- Right Help Right Now: <https://www.hhr.virginia.gov/12-14-2022-Two-Page-BH-Plan-Summary.pdf>
- Virginia Community Health Workers Association: <https://chwofva.com/>

**Next ACHDHE meeting: October 10, 2023.**

**Time:** 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

**Host Site: James Madison Building,** 109 Governor Street, 23219.

Kindly send your questions to [augustine.doe@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:augustine.doe@vdh.virginia.gov).

**Respectfully Submitted By:**

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

**Minutes Reviewed By:**

David C. **Rose**, MD, FAAP, ACHDHE Chair

Kate **Bradshaw**, Ph.D., FACHE, CPHQ, ACHDHE Vice Chair