

To: Marissa Levine, MD, MPH, FAAFP, State Health Commissioner
From: Luisa F. Soaterna, MPH, Chair, Advisory Council on Health Disparities & Health Equity (ACHDHE)
Date: April 10, 2018
Subject: ACHDHE Recommendation for Program Enhancement

In response to the January 9, 2018 presentation on the “Virginia’s 2018 Legislative Updates” presented to the ACHDHE by Mr. Joe Hilbert, we respectfully make the following recommendations:

- We respectfully recommend that the Health Commissioner consider ACHDHE a champion for Health Department policy issues, especially those that impact health equity and health disparity, and encourage input on and advocacy for these issues. We further recommend providing ACHDHE with a preview of issues at its July meeting for providing meaningful input.

In response to the January 9, 2018 “Update on Virginia’s Plan for Well-Being” presented to the ACHDHE by Dr. Norman Oliver, we respectfully make the following recommendations:

- We respectfully recommend that the Health Commissioner further emphasize “Healthy, Connected Communities” by pursuing endorsement and partnership with local planning departments, planning district commissions, school boards and school administration, chambers of commerce, businesses, and other health collaborators: hospitals, FQHPs, community services boards and medical societies.
- We recommend that the Health Commissioner review and revitalize the plan before the 2021-25 relaunch with a new plan section that provides directions for creating inclusive multi-sector partnerships around the plan that acknowledge, honor, and interface with other important strategic community assessments, strategic plans, and plan implementations.

In response to the January 9, 2018 “Comprehensive Harm Reduction for Persons Who Inject Drugs” presented to the ACHDHE by Ms. Elaine Martin, we respectfully make the following recommendations:

- We applaud the Comprehensive Harm Reduction (CHR) efforts led by the Virginia Department of Health, and we recommend engaging change agents in communities identified as eligible for hosting CHR efforts, to generate a stronger interest and to build long-term capacity for these efforts.
- We also respectfully recommend redoubling efforts to gain law enforcement support for implementation of CHR initiatives in eligible communities.