

**Commissioner's Minority Health Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**October 13, 2009 – 11:00am – 2:00pm**  
**LaPrade Library, 9000 Hull Street, Richmond, Virginia 23236**

**Member Attendees:** Melissa Canaday; Lucie Ferguson, PhD, MPH, RN; Gail Jennings, PhD; and Hassan Yousuf, MD

**Members Absent:** Gloria Addo-Ayensu, MD, MPH; Judy Anderson; Jane G. Cabarrus; Miliagritos L. Flinn; Baxter Harrington, MS; Tram Nguyen; Michael A. Pyles, PhD; David Simmons, MSN, RN, CNN; Claudia M. Tellez, MD; Juan Villalona, MD; and Rudolph Wilson, PhD

**Staff Attendance:** Michael Royster, MD, MPH; Karen Reed, MA; Susan Triggs, RN, MPH; and Anika Richards – Intern

**1. Welcome**

Meeting called to order by Gail Jennings, MHAC Secretary (Chair/Vice-chair absent).

**2. Agenda**

The agenda was adopted by the MHAC members

**3. Minutes**

July 14, 2009 minutes were reviewed and adopted as written by MHAC members.

**4. Updates on MHAC Health Equity Activities – Health Equity Partnerships/Initiatives**

Lucie Ferguson advised the group that the City of Richmond Health Department is putting out a Request for Applications to provide flu shots in poor communities throughout the Richmond City. Bon Secours is applying so their mobile health clinic can participate in this venture.

Melissa Canaday told the group that the Sacred Heart Center was presenting facilitated showings of “Unnatural Causes: Is inequality making us sick” to their lay health promoters group. She also told everyone that Omnicity is collaborating with VCU Community Outreach and the OMHPHP to submit an environmental grant proposal to the National Institutes of Health. They are working closely with Cornelia Ramsey and Dr. Royster.

Lucie Ferguson spoke about the press conference with Healthcare for All Virginians. Some of the represented organizations were the Virginia Healthcare Foundation, Virginia Poverty Law Group, AARP, Bon Secours, and INOVA. Some priority areas are

- Moving Virginia from the 48<sup>th</sup> state regarding their Medicaid reimbursement rate
- Inclusion of adults as Medicaid recipients
- Children's healthcare
- Expanding FAMIS to 250% of the Federal Poverty Level

**5. 2008 BRFSS data on: Reactions to Race and Social Context Questions**

Gail Jennings, Epidemiologist in the VDH Division of Chronic Disease Prevention and Control spoke to attendees about the BRFSS Analysis regarding the new modules on

Reactions to Race, Social Context, and Built Environment and how these relate to chronic disease. She provided handouts that presented a summary of the findings for the new modules. The data analyzed and discussed results from surveying of over 5,000 adults ages 18 years and older. Questions regarding racial identity, perceived racial discrimination, and the built environment in which respondents lived will hopefully help determine whether or not these factors have an effect on health status. Dr. Jennings reported that “compared to whites, blacks and Hispanics were more likely to report being treated differently on the basis of race, more likely to experience physical symptoms and/or be emotionally upset as a result of being treated differently. Of those that reported that they thought about race at least once a week.

- Blacks 41.2%
- Hispanics 42.3%
- Whites 9.5%

Respondents were asked about their living environment in terms of physical safety, food security, accessibility to necessary services, and walkability of their community. They reported on whether they felt healthy or not. Their responses were compared on the basis of reported experiences with racial discrimination, neighborhood safety, food insecurity, and community walkability. The analysis revealed that environment is related to health status.

The most current BRFSS data is from 2008 and in the form of County and District data. Susan Spain is the BRFSS Coordinator for VDH and is working with others to make a public use data file available. One limitation is that the BRFSS sample supporting these findings is small compared to other studies. There is no space for the race and social condition questions in the 2010 BRFSS Questionnaire, but efforts are being made to get race and social condition questions added to the core modules for years subsequent to the 2010 questionnaire. Gail advised that she is interested in additional analysis. Dr. Royster told the group that Dr. Norm Oliver, UVA is interested in additional analysis, and Dr. Yousuf voiced his interest also.

## **6. Presentation: CHAMPION Program: Leading Virginia to the Finish Line**

Heidi Hertz, Obesity Prevention Coordinator for the VDH Women Infants and Children (WIC) Program, provided an overview of the Commonwealth’s Healthy Approach and Mobilization Plan for Inactivity Obesity, and Nutrition (CHAMPION) program. She presented a map view of the prevalence of obesity in Virginia and in the United States and discussed findings that show a relationship between environment, access to health care, road safety, and income. Attendees were informed that the CHAMPION focus is two-pronged: a) That there are health components in all policies, and b) that the healthy choice becomes the easy choice. The CHAMPION Obesity Prevention Plan includes providing:

- A Resource Guide
- Training
- Encouraging families to work together to achieve health-related goals
- Business case for breastfeeding which is teaching people to use their human resources

CHAMPION facilitators are moving around Virginia implementing the Regional Re-Engagement Program.

- Working with communities and stores regarding moving fruits and vegetables closer to the cash register than the candy
- Working with the Virginia Department of Education to make sure programs are in alignment with the Governor’s scorecard
- Engaging in policy intervention regarding the Child and Adult Care Feeding Program
- Encouraging community gardeners by working with Virginia Cooperative Extension master gardeners program
- Funding a “Veggie Van” (similar to the ice cream truck)
- Facilitating a Childhood Obesity Prevention Class at Martin Luther King Middle School (Bon Secours is sponsor)
- Community-based participatory approach models have been used in Philadelphia and San Francisco (Heidi will send information on how the local schools in these areas participated to get the project going; Dr. Royster offered to send information to Lucie Ferguson on the work being done in San Francisco to develop youth leaders who worked with local merchants to offer healthy foods.)

CHAMPION is targeting older adults for physical activity community assessments that include a walkability checklist. They have partnered with Weed and Seed to use their resources to promote physical activity in this population while enhancing crime prevention strategies.

Lucie Ferguson advised the group of the Health and Human Services Prevention Grant. Ten local health districts are interested. The checklist has been sent out. The VDH Commissioner’s office will focus on two communities that are “ready to go”.

For more information, go to the CHAMPION website at <http://www.vahealth.org/WIC/Champion/index.htm> or contact [heidi.hertz@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:heidi.hertz@vdh.virginia.gov)

**7. Commissioner’s Updates** (provided by Dr. Royster in Dr. Remley’s absence due to a scheduling conflict)

RECOMMENDATION LETTER: Dr. Remley reviewed the recommendations sent to her by MHAC, and the following determinations were made:

MHAC/OMHPHP: Integrated into the Code of Virginia	No	Try again next year to see if this recommendation can be moved forward at that time
MAPP/MHAC data sharing proposal	Yes	Joanne Wakeham, PhD, VDH Director of Public Health Nursing (see Community Engagement Subcommittee report) met with Community Engagement Subcommittee to discuss

She is appreciative of MHAC previous recommendations for outreach and encouraged members to continue to provide such information. Members were reminded and encouraged to take advantage of the additional opportunities to put forth recommendations to the Commissioner throughout the year.

#### INFLUENZA PLANNING:

All local health departments are distributing the seasonal flu shot. The H1N1 vaccine will be distributed to critical populations first and then to the whole population. Surveillance activities are in place, and so far, the highest hospitalization rates from H1N1 have been with young children and pregnant women. Older members of the population are less affected in general, possibly because many people in that age group may have been exposed to a similar virus in the past, which resulted in some immunity against the Novel H1N1 virus.

The OMHPHP is working with others to reach out to minority and low income communities. African Americans and Latino children have higher hospital/death rates. The highest prevalence is in the southwest and central parts of Virginia.

Gail Jennings asked a question about the perception that Thimerisol in vaccines is a problem and concerns many parents. Melissa Canaday stated that she has heard Native American pregnant women saying they would “not roll up their sleeve for the government to give them a shot.” She added that they might “roll up their sleeve” for a Native doctor to give them a shot. Dr. Royster agreed that there are indeed a lot of rumors going around about why people should not get the shot. MHAC members were asked to help spread the word about why people should get the shot. Members can refer people to [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) and to the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/ga.htm> or contact OMHPHP staff for additional information.

**INFANT MORTALITY RATE** (rates are percentages): The overall state rate has decreased from the 2007 rate of 7.7 to 6.7. The rate among African American women statewide decreased from 15.5 to 12.2 and among White women from 6 to 5.3. The infant mortality rate among African American women in Richmond decreased from approximately to 11.

Lucie Ferguson asked if there was a breakdown by health districts available. Dr. Royster reported that he is unsure if it's available for all districts at this point, but if not, it will be soon. Dr. Royster also stated that the reason for the decrease is not known, but there has been a consistent effort among health districts for several years to address this issue. Infant mortality rate reduction, with additional focus on the Black-White infant mortality inequity, has been a key priority of Dr. Remley during her tenure as State Health Commissioner.

## **8. OMHPHP and National Updates**

Dr. Royster reported that the Health Equity Conference held September 10-11 was a success. Three hundred seventy (370) people registered for the conference. The speaker roster included those from Virginia and nationally and internationally recognized speakers. Dr. Royster announced that, as a follow-up to the Health Equity Conference, the Virginia Public Health Association has partnered with the OMHPHP to apply to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the WellPoint Foundation for seed grant funding to provide

ten communities with funds to implement health equity initiatives. The proposal also included:

- Training for funded organizations
- Technical Assistance
- Implementation funding
- Annual conference for development of statewide learning community

Dr. Royster also reported that the Healthcare Reform Debate continues in Congress. Lucie Ferguson added that the U.S. Senate was voting on one of the proposals on the day of this meeting (October 13, 2009). The U.S. House of Representatives is also debating the issue.

Upcoming events include:

- American Public Health Association Annual Meeting in Philadelphia
  - OMHPHP will present an abstract on the Office's mission
  - OMHPHP will also present a paper of the GIS work being conducted in the office.
  - Dr. Royster will be joining the advisory committee for the National Health Policy Forum (provides recommendations to Congress and their staff)
- Dr. Royster will present at the
  - Tobacco Use Control Conference
  - South Hampton Roads Minority Health Association Conference
  - AARP Conference
- OMHPHP is working on developing health workforce recommendations per Delegate Phil Hamilton as follows:
  - Create a quasi-state entity to work on state health care workforce
  - Prepare recommendations for submission to Delegate Hamilton in November to take to General Assembly to consider for next year
  - Dr. Royster announced that the annual VRHA conference will be held on...in conjunction with the Virginia Free Clinic Association (VFCA). Information regarding the conference will be sent to MHAC members.
- OMHPHP revisited Health Equity definitions. The definitions of health equity and health inequity were changed as follows.

**Old definitions:**

Health Equity: The absence of differences in health between groups with differential exposure to those social and economic policies, practices and conditions that create barriers to opportunity.

Health Inequities: Disparities in health that are a result of systemic, avoidable and unjust social and economic policies, practices, and conditions that create barriers to opportunity.

**New definitions:**

Health equity is achieving the highest level of health for all people.

Health equity entails focused societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities by equalizing the conditions for health for all groups, especially for those who have experienced socioeconomic disadvantage or historical injustices.

Health Inequity: Disparities in health (or health care) that are systemic and avoidable and, therefore, considered unfair or unjust.

## 9. Division of Health Equity Initiatives

Karen Reed thanked MHAC members for partnering on the planning of the Health Equity Conference. She also reported that Health Equity Marketing Committee members, Rene Cabral-Daniels and Karen Reed promoted the topic of funding and health equity via drafting an article that was published in the September 14, 2009 issue of Grant Makers in Health, titled “We Must Promote Health Equity in Spite of Current Economic Challenges”. The link to the article is [http://www.gih.org/topics3985/topics\\_list.htm?attrib\\_id=18500](http://www.gih.org/topics3985/topics_list.htm?attrib_id=18500). Recent and upcoming Division of Health Equity Activities include: \_\_

- Sacred Heart Center: Showing of “Unnatural Causes” segments on first Wednesday of every month until all segments are shown
- Attending the UVA-Wise Diabetes Roundtable to discuss community-based participatory approaches to health
- Presenting to the Regional Perinatal Contractors’ Meeting on methods for bringing diversity into collaborative processes
- Analyzing the data collected at the RAM Clinic in July
- Hosting the Latino Heritage Month Program in September and the First Nations Heritage Month Program in November
- Presenting at the Virginia Free Clinic Association/ Virginia Rural Health Association (VFCA/VRHA) Conference November 15 – 17, 2009. As a follow-up to the Congregational Health Assessments, Susan will discuss the topic, “Expanding the Margins: A new paradigm for successfully doing more with less” ( <http://www.vrha.org/09conference.html> )
- Susan Triggs is the American Public Health Association Community-Based Participatory Public Health Caucus Professional/Academic Program Planner for the 2010 Annual Meeting, “Social Justice: A public health imperative”
- OMHPHP has been invited to Minnesota at an undetermined date in the coming months to provide expertise and guidance in setting up an Office of Health Equity.
- During summer an intern Christopher Gunther, completed preliminary analysis of surveying the language needs of health districts throughout Virginia. Final report will be issued in the coming months.
- Follow up to collaborative initiative begun at the Health Equity Conference, DHE will provide leadership in forming statewide interpreter network
- 2009 Cultural series program: titled, “Caring for Muslim Dead Bodies” held at the request of VDH office.
- Introduced Anika Richards, a Virginia Tech PHD Student who is doing an internship with OMHPHP. She is evaluating OMHPHP’s health equity community

engagement initiatives using “Unnatural Causes.” Anika will meet with MHAC members.

- Healthy People 2020 (HP2020) Grant: Implementation of the grant proposal is moving forward. A contractor has been hired. November is set for piloting the project that will train cabinet members that will be appointed by the new Governor.

## **10. Sub-Committee Reports:**

### **Community Engagement Subcommittee**

Susan Triggs gave the report for the Community Engagement Subcommittee. She reported that Joanne Wakeham, PhD, VDH Director of Public Health Nursing met with subcommittee members to discuss the sharing of data from Mobilizing Action through Planning and Partnership (MAPP) with MHAC. MAPP is a public health planning tool designed to bring together diverse partners to identify and address the health priorities for that community. Dr. Wakeham provided a comprehensive overview of MAPP and the status of the local health districts regarding this process. She explained that the data is being entered into a CDC database that will generate MAPP scores. This means the data is not easily accessible to VDH, but will be accessible once all of the data is entered.

### **Legislative/Policy Subcommittee**

Lucie Ferguson gave the report for the Policy/Legislative Subcommittee. The group is concerned about the commitment of its current members and needs an infusion of new members if it is to continue to function. Dr. Royster suggested that this subcommittee may not be needed for the rest of the year since it is during the time leading into summer that recommendations are provided to the Commissioner. Lucie Ferguson suggested a system of reminding subcommittee members about the meetings that may increase participation. Dr. Royster spoke about the group’s desire to engage in advocacy issues and suggested that they could send recommendations to the Health Commissioner regarding such issues but reminded the group that they were free to engage in initiatives around advocacy outside of their role as MHAC members.

## **11. MHAC Action on Recommendations by subcommittee**

There were no recommendations submitted for action.

## **12. New Business**

### **Officers/Membership**

Karen Reed reminded the group that it is time to elect new officers. By unanimous decision, the group decided to carry out the election in the same manner it was carried out by Karen Reed for 2008. The current officers are

- Chair           David Simmons
- Vice Chair     Rudolph Wilson
- Secretary     Gail Jennings

Descriptions for these positions are as follows:

**Chair**

- Convene regularly scheduled meetings
- Preside or arrange for other officers to preside at each meeting in the following order, Vice Chair, Secretary
- Provide input and review all agendas in advance of meetings
- Call special meetings
- Appoint appropriate committees and committee chairs
- Exercise overall responsibility for the smooth running the committee

**Vice Chair**

- Serve in the absence of the Chair
- Assist the Chair in smooth running of the committee
- Chair an annual task force sub-committee to develop budget request package

**Secretary**

- Keep records of committee actions, including review and signing to certify the minutes
- Monitoring & prompting members for committee action.

Gail Jennings asked if the group is open to new members. Karen Reed advised that letters and e-mails will be sent to non-attendees and new recommendations will be sent to Dr. Remley for new member appointments. The goal is to expand diversity both racially/ethnically and geographically. Melissa Canaday asked about moving the meeting to different locations around the Commonwealth. The group discussed the possibility of opening up the meetings to teleconferencing or videoconferencing. Karen Reed advised that, if this is done, all sites must be open to the public. Gail Jennings reminded everyone that there is no money available to travel, making it necessary for locations to be close by – within one to two hours from Richmond.

**December Meeting Content**

The meeting agenda will consist of:

- New officers
- Strategic planning (accomplishments)
- 2010 Conference
- Suggestions for new members via resume'
  - Sector (nonprofit, public housing)
  - Geography
- Nominations due by October 31, 2009
  - Vote by November 15, 2009
  - Will announce new officers by December 8, 2009 meeting

Members discussed and agreed to have the December meeting at the Sacred Heart Center.

**13. Announcements**



None

#### **14. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

#### **10. Meeting Adjourned**

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**The NEXT MHAC MEETING is scheduled for:**

**Date:** December 8, 2009 (Special Meeting)      **Time:** 11:00 am-2:00 pm

**Location – Sacred Heart Center, 1400 Perry Street, Richmond, VA 23224**

**Future MHAC Meeting Dates - 2009**

December 8, 2009      **Time:** 11:00 am-2:00 pm

**Questions or special needs – please contact: Susan Triggs, Health Equity Specialist – 804-864-7429 – [susan.triggs@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:susan.triggs@vdh.virginia.gov)**

**Minutes prepared by: Susan Triggs**

**Minutes reviewed by: Gail Jennings, MHAC Secretary**