The State Health Commissioner's Advisory Council on Health Disparity and Health Equity (ACHDHE)

Input on the Virginia Department of Health Budget Priorities, May 2021:

Question 1:	ACHDHE Suggestions/Recommendations
Are there any budgetary priorities related to COVID-19 that you would recommend for VDH? For example, one member recommended during the April 2021 meeting that VDH increase student loan repayments for healthcare professionals to address burnout and shortages stemming from COVID-19.	Significantly increase student loan support funding for nurses and, as indicated, primary care physicians or physician assistants (eg; loan forgiveness in lieu of serving in public sector jobs in the designated Virginia's Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA))
	Based on issues and "lessons learned" during the pandemic, prioritize planning and funding to address adequate future supply chains for PPEs and other essential medical equipment; capacity and sustainability of hospitals in HPSAs; outreach to individuals with disabilities, the homebound, and minorities.
	Recommend that a budgetary priority be increased funding for provision of mobile COVID-19 vaccine delivery services in areas where access is the primary obstacle for underserved populations to be vaccinated.
	Recommend that budgetary priority be given to funding strategies for the provision of COVID-19 vaccinations to persons in substance use disorder treatment whether that be MAT or other recovery-aimed interventions.

Question 2:	**ACHDHE Suggestions/Recommendations**
Are there any budgetary priorities related to past ACHDHE recommendations that you would recommend for VDH? In case it is helpful, a list of ACHDHE recommendations from recent years was shared with you in the email announcement for this survey.	In response to the July 9, 2019 presentation on the "Virginia's Community Health Workers (CHW) Initiative," presented to the ACHDHE by Valerie McAllister, we recommend that: The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) strategically develops the CHW workforce to promote the awareness of preventable diseases, reduction of medical cost and the improvement in health outcomes in vulnerable communities. The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) promotes the awareness of CHWs uniformly within the VDH structure and partnerships across the commonwealth and facilitate standardization of the CHW core competencies and training curriculum. The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) prioritizes the CHW certification process past the grand parenting period and work towards financial sustainability for the CHW workforce within the Commonwealth of Virginia.
	Recommend that past recommendation, re: more term of service student loan repayment options and necessary increased funding include mental health professionals and addiction and recovery advocates.

Question 3: Are there any non-COVID-19 budgetary priorities that you would recommend for VDH?	**ACHDHE Suggestions/Recommendations**
	Based on lessons from pandemic, 1) develop more efficient mechanisms. as indicated, to address potential future health emergencies, eg; contracting services; 2) Examine organization and deployment of VDH staff and resources to improve ongoing healthcare for populations in HPSA.
	In partnership with VDBHS, develop long-term strategies for developing/increasing workforce to address needs of Virginians with disabilities and those with addictions statewide, with emphasis on HPSA.
	VDH advocate for a universal living wage for all persons working within long-term care facilities. Apply and enforce civil penalties on LTC residences that consistently record poor survey results. Increase the number of surveyors. VDH to share routinely best practice models of care with LTC operators and owners. VHD to advocate for higher payments to assisted living facilities offering residence to auxiliary grant recipients. VDH to support increase financial support for the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program.
	Recommend budgetary priority be given to faith-based initiatives aimed at treatment and recovery from substance misuse.