

To: M. Norman Oliver, MD, MA; State Health Commissioner

From: Melody Armstrong, MPA, Chair, Advisory Council on Health Disparity & Health Equity (ACHDHE), Virginia Department of Health (VDH)

Date: April 13, 2021

Subject: ACHDHE Recommendation for Program Enhancement:

In response to the January 12, 2021 presentation on “Virginia’s COVID-19 Vaccine Overview,” presented to the ACHDHE by Christine Gray, Director, Division of Immunization, we respectfully present the following recommendations:

- The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) develops a better communication that includes clearly defined eligibility criteria/and terminologies that specifically reference people with disabilities, their support staff and other essential workers. We acknowledge the opportunity and openness provided to us citizens for our feedback in the process, specifically within the Health Equity Workgroup and the ACHDHE.
- The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) strategically provide systematic and accurate messages about the vaccine in order to dispel misinformation about the vaccine and the fear of adverse reaction. That the state address conflicting messages and policies from national leadership.

In response to the January 12, 2021 presentation on “VDH COVID-19 Health Equity Research Agenda,” presented to the ACHDHE by Justin Crow, Director, Division of Social Epidemiology, we respectfully present the following recommendations:

- The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) makes certain the research document is actionable and utilized with immense benefit to bridge and established gaps by putting in place measures and processes for the implementation of innovative and effective health equity initiatives locally and/or statewide.
- The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) trains the COVID-19 research staff about vulnerable populations including people with disabilities, Latinos/Hispanic, African Americans, and other population groups.
- The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) research analysts study the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations, reason for the impact, the extend of available preventions and recommendations for improvement in future emergencies (where possible).

Signed: Melody Armstrong

Melody Armstrong, MPA, & Chair, ACHDHE