

To: M. Norman **Oliver**, MD, MA, State Health Commissioner, Virginia Department of Health:  
From: Nia **Harrison**, MPP, Chair, Advisory Council on Health Disparity & Health Equity (ACHDHE),  
Virginia Department of Health (VDH)  
Date: October 12, 2021: Presented: January 11, 2022  
Subject: **ACHDHE Recommendations for Program Enhancement:**

In response to the October 12, 2021 presentation on “Virginia’s General Assembly Special Session Updates” presented to the ACHDHE by Joe **Hilbert**, Deputy Commissioner for Governmental and Regulatory Affairs, VDH, we respectfully present the following recommendations:

- VDH prioritizes high need areas to improve their public health services with the implementation of an elaborate and comprehensive community outreach that makes the services and application process for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant available especially in rural areas. VDH should also obtain long-term financial support from Virginia General Assembly after the federal grant expires.
- For all individuals directly served by the ARPA initiative, VDH should collect their demographic information including but not limited to age, race/ethnicity, disability status, income and locality.

In response to the October 12, 2021 presentation on “VDH Data COVID-19 Data Pool Review” presented to the ACHDHE by Kim **Dennis**, Center for Public Health Informatics, VDH, we respectfully present the following recommendations:

- VDH collects and analyzes vaccine data based on disability status, and for the agency to continue to foster school-based vaccination clinics in Virginia.
- VDH do more data collection to address the overall COVID-19 vaccination rate in order to identify groups that still lag behind and develop strategies that enhance the agency’s vaccination outreach initiatives for the groups.

ACHDHE members appreciate the inclusion of the members’ presentations at the meetings. This affords the members’ detail awareness of each member’s work/activities in Virginia’s communities and the ability to provide direct feedback to the initiatives in ways that prioritize and advance health equity across the Commonwealth.

In response to the October 12, 2021, presentation on “Understanding Latin American Heritage and Health: Opportunities to Advance Health Equity” presented to the ACHDHE by Antonio **Villa**, Adjunct Professor, Virginia Commonwealth University, we respectfully present the following recommendations:

- Dr. Villa continues the great outreach to underserved population groups that provides healthcare quality improvements to the local health departments and other service delivery organizations although the legal/political status of immigrants remains to be a major barrier.
- The organization’s strategic approach of listening to the community’s needs and adopting the model of working with trusted messengers is a notable best practice. Keep up the great work.

Signed: Nia **Harrison**  
Nia Harrison, MPP, & Chair, ACHDHE