

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

**April 11, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

**James Madison Building  
109 Governor Street, Richmond, VA 23219  
Main Conference Room (In-person and Televised Meeting) – 11:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.**

In person attendance: **Parham Jaber, MD; Sandra Serna, MPH; David C. Rose, MD, MBA, FAAP; George Worthington, MS; Nia Harrison, MPP; Linda Lee Redmond, PhD; Elvira De La Cruz, BS; Patti Kiger, M. Ed; El Hadji Djibril Niang; Karen O'Brien, BS; Maceo E. Freeman, D. Min; Antonio Villa, MD, MPH; Olugbenga O. Obasanjo, MBBS, Ph.D., MPH, MBA; Carolyn C. Turner, MS; Linnaya Graf, PhD, MCHES, CPH; Amy Christine Hodge, M. Div.; John Jason Cecil, BA;**

Virtual Attendees:

**Gordon Walker, MS; Eleanor Woodson, BSN, RN; Kate S. K. Bradshaw, Ph.D., FACHE, CPHQ.**

Did Not Attend:

**Radhika Thirunagari, MS; Zakia McKensey, RN; Melody Armstrong, MPA, BSN.**

VDH Staff: **Augustine Doe, MS, MPA; Alvin Perlas, OHE Former Intern, Jasmine Martinez, P3 program.**

## **WELCOME**

Dr. Rose, ACHDHE Chair, introduced himself and welcomed the attendees. He asked for introductions before calling the meeting to order.

## **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Dr. Rose shared an overview of the meeting agenda and asked if members had any suggested changes.

Meeting Agenda:

[Agenda](#)

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The January 10, 2023, meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

[Minutes](#)

## **ACHDHE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSIONER**

Dr. Kate Bradshaw, ACHDHE Vice Chair, presented the ACHDHE recommendation document from the January 10, 2023, meeting presentations to the Acting State Health Commissioner, Dr. Parham Jaber.

[Recommendations](#)

## **STATE HEALTH COMMISSIONER UPDATES:**

Dr. Parham Jaber, Acting State Health Commissioner, shared his updates in two categories, general updates and replies to the previous ACHDHE meeting presentations' recommendations.

### **General Updates:**

- Acting Commissioner Jaber shared his background growing up in Baltimore, having worked in public health his entire career including as Director of Chesterfield Health District and Chief Deputy Commissioner of VDH, and most recently serving as Deputy Director of Fairfax County Health Department.
- During COVID-19, Dr. Jaber served as Health Director in Virginia Beach and Norfolk. In his role, he oversaw the continued and effective operation of the local health department. He worked

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with faith-based and grassroots organizations to ensure under-resourced minority communities also had access to COVID19 vaccination and testing. Dr. Jaberri also helped Virginia Beach secure a \$3.3M CDC grant to address health disparities needs of vulnerable people.

- Dr. Jaberri thanked the ACHDHE leadership and members for their dedication to VDH and highlighted the great work of Dr. David Rose. He recognized the talents of the directors and supporting staff at VDH including Office of Health Equity Director, Sandra Serna, ACHDHE support staff Augustine Doe.
- Dr. Jaberri told the ACHDHE members that addressing health disparity continues as a high priority for VDH. He then provided reflections on the recommendations provided by the ACHDHE relating to the January 2023 meeting presentations. (see below).

**January 10, 2023, Acting Commissioner Reaction and Reflections to Recommendations Proposed:**

- Recommendations on the presentation, VA 2023, General Assembly Bills Update:
  - Dr. Jaberri acknowledged the shortage of medical professionals and that healthcare scholarship programs are one way to address the situation. He mentioned one bill from the past General Assembly Session, which was intended to provide requirements for continuing education for healthcare providers on cultural competency and implicit bias. The bill was ultimately turned into a study that will be completed this year by the Task Force on Maternal Health Data and Quality Measures, and he looks forward to the report and recommendations. Dr. Jaberri will work with the Office of Health Equity to provide additional information on the outcomes of the General Assembly at a future meeting.
- Recommendations on the presentation: COVID-19 Best Practices & Lessons Learned
  - Funding is a priority for the federal government, and there are many conversations around how to support water infrastructure. The VDH Office of Drinking Water (ODW) relies heavily on such funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Here at VDH, the Office of Drinking Water recently finalize a policy that brings \$1million for small and disadvantaged communities.
- Recommendations on the presentation of *Sickle Cell Disease Program Management*:
  - VDH has partnered with VCU, Inova, UVA, and Carilion to strengthen the infrastructure for comprehensive adult sickle cell care in the central, northern, and western regions, respectively. We lack a partner in the Tidewater area and will continue to work to establish a partnership in the region.
- Recommendations on the presentation *Pandemic Update*:
  - As COVID-19 winds down and the public health emergency comes to an end, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), Free Clinics, and local health departments will continue to provide access to vaccines and testing for those who are uninsured or underinsured. As COVID changes and a new variant emerges, public health will focus on ensuring that healthcare services are provided to those that need it most: vaccinations, testing, contact tracing, and outbreak investigation. We will ensure that the surveillance systems are improved.
  - In conclusion, Dr. Jaberri described the recommendations as solid and said VDH would progress on them in collaboration with the agency's stakeholders and partners. He then entertained questions.
  - An ACHDHE member asked if there is a way to ensure physicians at VDH receive training on implicit bias.

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- In his reply, Dr. Jaber framed the question of how we ensure the workforce provides better services in the community. He also broadened the question beyond VDH to include other providers in the community. Dr. Jaber suggested collaborating with academic institutions to address the situation but quickly highlighted that a set of standards determines graduate medical education. However, he is willing to partner in that effort.

**PRESENTATIONS:**

- Presentation: "[Virginia Mental Health Access Program \(VMAP\)](#)," by Bethany Geldmaker, Ph.D., VMAP program manager, VDH
- Presentation: "[An Overview of VA Mobile Crisis Intervention Initiative](#)," by Curt Gleeson, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
- Presentation: "[Mental Health Cultural Considerations](#)," by Elvira De La Cruz, BSc, CEO & Senior Advocate, and Tomiko Tamashiro Pardo, Language Access Coordinator, Latinos in Virginia Empowerment Center

**New Business:**

ACHDHE members adopted the new state electronic meeting policy as indicated in the ACHDHE procedural guidelines, Article IV, Section 1, page 4.

**UPDATES:**

**Office of Health Equity (OHE) Updates**

Ms. Sandra Serna, Director Office of Health Equity, shared the following updates:

- The Office of Health Equity received a no cost extension for the Center for Disease Control and Prevention health disparity funds (OT21-2103) which are being used to expand on the work in rural Virginia and with the faith-based community, as well as Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). The Partners in Prayer and Prevention (P3) program has awarded over 98 awards since 2021 with this funding. During the most recent round, P3 provided 27 awards, totaling 1.1 million dollars. The application to participate in the next round of P3 is open until April 25th.
- The Division of Social Epidemiology in the Office of Health Equity is working on updating the Health Opportunity Index (HOI). The HOI presents various social and economic factors that influence health outcomes across Virginia's communities. The revised version is expected to be released soon.
- Ms. Serna provided an quick update on the Governor's Right Help, Right Now efforts to increase the behavioral health workforce (Pillar 5 of the plan), and named some of the agencies working alongside VDH-OHE as part of that group, including the Departments of Corrections, Education, Medical Assistance Services, Health Professions, and Behavioral Health.

**ACHDHE Members' Updates:**

- No update was provided.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- No update was provided.

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**ADJOURNMENT:**

The ACHDHE meeting was adjourned at 1:56 PM.

**Next ACHDHE meeting: July 11, 2023.**

**Time:** 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

**Host Site: James Madison Building,** 109 Governor Street, 23219.

Kindly send your questions to [augustine.doe@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:augustine.doe@vdh.virginia.gov).

**Respectfully Submitted By:**

Augustine **Doe**, Division of Multicultural Health and Community Engagement (DMHCE)

**Minutes Reviewed By:**

David C. **Rose**, MD, FAAP, ACHDHE Chair

Kate **Bradshaw**, Ph.D., FACHE, CPHQ, ACHDHE Vice Chair