



Commonwealth of Massachusetts Health Disparities Council

**SENATOR
SUSAN FARGO
Co-Chair**

◆
**State House
Room 504
(617) 722-1572**

**REPRESENTATIVE
BYRON RUSHING
Co-Chair**

◆
**State House
Room 121
(617) 722-2006**

Disparities Council Agenda

Meeting Minutes

One Ashburton Place, 21st Floor, Rooms 2 and 3

Monday July 18, 2011

10:00AM - 12:00 PM

1. Approval of Minutes

Senator Fargo called for the approval of the minutes from the March 21, 2011 meeting. No objection was voiced and the minutes were approved.

2. Updates:

Legislative Group: Senator Fargo informed the Council that two bills related to racial and ethnic health disparities (Senate Bill 1091 and House Bill 1518) were reported favorably by the Joint Committee on Public Health.

Senator Fargo announced that the Legislative Working Group (LWG) will be forming to meet and help advance the goals of the Health Disparities Council in the Legislature and the Administration. The LWG will be chaired by Council member Dr. Sara Orozco of the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology. The LWG will be charged with helping advance existing disparities-related legislation as well as tracking ongoing health care cost containment and payment reform efforts in the Legislature.

Senator Fargo suggested the LWG should analyze Governor Patrick's payment reform bill and plan for possible amendments to make sure the issue of racial and ethnic health disparities is addressed in any subsequent legislation. Representative Rushing asked members of the Council if they would volunteer to participate in the LWG, and several members did so.

Representative Rushing asked any members interested in working with the LWG to contact Dr. Orozco to be notified of planned meetings or discussions.

Dr. Alice Coombs suggested that the LWG and the Council could adapt the best practices of the federal Office of Minority Health in working to include racial and ethnic health disparities in Massachusetts public policy and health payment reform efforts.

3. EHS Office of Health Equity

Interpreter Services Update: Georgia Simpson-May gave a presentation on some amendments and updates to the Interpreter Services Working Group Report that was previously approved by the Council. Amendments related to the provision of medical interpreter services in mental health, the timeline for recommendations in the report, and added recommendations for the Division of Health Care Finance and Policy in considering reimbursements for interpreter services, among others. The amendments and updates will be made available on the Council website.

4. Health Care Quality and Cost Council

HCQCC Disparities Efforts: Administrator Jessica Moschella gave a presentation on the Health Care Quality and Cost Council's efforts on racial and ethnic health disparities. The HCQCC has established a website (www.MyHealthCareOptions.org) where consumers can find user-friendly information on the cost and quality of medical services in Massachusetts to help them make informed healthcare decisions. For claims data submitted between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011, HCQCC required each carrier to report the required race, ethnicity and language data for at least 2% of the unique members in the eligibility file during the calendar year. This data will help HCQCC track and analyze racial and ethnic health disparities in the Commonwealth.

5. Governor Deval Patrick's Youth Violence Prevention Initiative

Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services Marilyn Chase gave a presentation on Governor Patrick's Youth Violence Prevention Initiative. She noted that most funding and grants are currently geared toward violence prevention instead of intervention or suppression. Violence is a huge problem among minority populations, especially young men. Relatively few resources are currently targeted toward the 15-20% of the youth population that is most at-risk of becoming perpetrators or victims of violence and needs intervention. This group is the focus of the initiative, and the administration

will work with local communities to identify these youth, engage their parents and other family members, and foster community engagement and social networking to prevent violence. This issue is viewed as a public safety and a public health issue, and relates strongly to the issues of racial and ethnic health disparities. Reducing violence will promote healthy communities, increase equity, and improve access to healthcare.

6. Future Meetings

The group ended the meeting and resolved to meet again on Thursday, September 1, 2011.