



**SENATOR  
SUSAN FARGO  
Co-Chair**

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

## ***Commonwealth of Massachusetts Health Disparities Council***

**REPRESENTATIVE  
BYRON RUSHING  
Co-Chair**

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

### **Health Disparities Council Meeting Minutes Monday, March 23, 2009**

**Council Members Present:** Senator Susan Fargo, Representative Byron Rushing, Secretary JudyAnn Bigby, Dr. Paul Mendis, Georgia Simpson May, Wanda McClain, Sarah Gordon representing Dr. Mary Lou Buyse, Debra Enos, Kim Henry representing Quentin Palfrey, Phyllis Peters, Pam Jones representing Dr. Barbara Ferrer, Dr. Dana Safran, Gregg Croteau, Sherry Dong, Hank Porten, Anuj Goel, Dr. Paul Mendis, Dr. Ronald Dunlap representing Dr. Alice Coombs, Frances Anthes and Derek Birindisi

#### **1. Workgroup Updates**

Georgia Simpson May presented on behalf of the Framework Group. The group is working on finalizing a narrative which will accompany their graphic representation of the principles necessary for a comprehensive approach to end disparities. The draft will likely be ready to share with the Council for May.

Joe-Ann Fergus presented on behalf of the Report Card Group. She discussed the various state reports which are informing the group's vision for the Massachusetts report card.

Anuj Goel and Dr. Dana Safran presented on the recommendations the R/E/L group is considering regarding health plans data collection effort. Secretary Bigby recommended the group reconvene before the next Health Care Quality and Cost Council meeting to concretize the Council's proposed recommendations regarding the standard the QCC should develop to assess health plan compliance and when that should compliance begin. The R/E/L group will focus their next steps on those suggestions.

Yashira Pepin gave an update on the newly created Health Disparities Council website. The website is currently behind the EOHHS firewall. The Council approved the content on the website, which includes an email address ([HDC@state.ma.us](mailto:HDC@state.ma.us))

where the public can submit information they would like posted and even sign up for the Council's mailing list. The Council had no objections so the website will be released to the public. The address is [www.mass.gov/hdc](http://www.mass.gov/hdc). However, Chairman Rushing asked to have the members listed in alphabetical order by their individual names and also by the appointing entities. Chairman Rushing also asked for the creation of a members'-only forum or list serve so that Council members can communicate with one another.

## **2. Commission Recommendations Update**

Secretary JudyAnn Bigby updated the Council on the status of some of the recommendations proposed during the 2004-2006 Massachusetts Commission to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities. The Secretary proposed that the Council not just check off whether these recommendations has been done but also evaluated whether they are effective for eliminating disparities. She highlighted various recommendations for which she suggested the Council request an update and evaluation, including "access to health insurance" given that the state passed Health Care Reform. The Council agreed that certain state agencies should come before the Council and present on the impact of Health Care Reform for minority populations. The Chairs agreed to continue to consider and suggest other presentations, as they relate to past recommendations, which would allow the Council to fulfill its oversight capacity.

## **3. Future Meetings**

Chairman Rushing told the Council that they are planning on having the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, the Coalition to Restore Civil Rights and the Civil Rights Division in the Office of the Attorney General present to the Council on health disparities as a civil rights issue.

## **4. Announcements**

Secretary JudyAnn Bigby announced to the Kaiser Family Foundation will be streaming a live webcast on the effects of the economic downturn on communities of color.

Health Care for All will be having a policy conference in June focusing on health disparities.

*Meeting Adjourned at 3:00PM*