



Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental and Health Equity Task Force Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 4, 2021

10:00 a.m.

Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

A regular meeting of the members (the “Members”) of the Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental and Health Equity Task Force (the “Task Force”) was held remotely on Wednesday, August 4, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. Eastern time via a virtual Microsoft Teams meeting.

Leadership Present

Secretary Pamela Cashwell (Chair)

Members Present

(Unless otherwise noted below, all members joined the videoconference at the opening of the meeting at approximately 10:00 a.m. and all members exited the videoconference by approximately 11:29 a.m. when the meeting was closed.)

Annette Taylor
Catherine Harvey Sevier
Cedric Bright (joined at 10:09 a.m.)
Elizabeth Biser
Giselle Corbie-Smith
Gregory Richardson
James Johnson Jr.
Lenora Campbell

Margaret Weller-Stargell
Sonyia Richardson
Stephanie McGarrah (Designee: David Howard)
T. Anthony Spearman
Trey Rabon
Viviana Martinez-Bianchi
Yazmin Garcia-Rico
Yvonne Holley

Members Absent

Adriana Chavela
Andres Henao
Carlos Rish
CC Lamberth
Charlene Green
Christy Clayton
Cornell Wright
Dale Jenkins
Donny Lambeth
Gene Woods (Designee: Fernando Little)

John Lumpkin
Johnathan Augustine
Juvencio Rocha Peralta
Kevin J. Price
Lynn Bottone
Pat Martinez
Quinny Sanchez Lopez
Rhett Brown
Walter Baucom

Others Present

Evin L. Grant, Policy Director, NC Department of Administration
Tammie Hall (Staff Liaison to Economic Opportunity & Business Development Subcommittee)
Carolina Fonseca Jimenez (Staff Liaison to Environmental Justice and Inclusion Subcommittee)
Sa’Metria Jones (Staff Liaison to Educational Opportunity Subcommittee)
Michael Leach (Staff Liaison to Access to Healthcare Subcommittee)

Catherine Rivera (Staff Liaison to Patient Engagement Subcommittee)
Justin Truesdale (Secretary)

Call to Order; Welcome

Secretary Pamela Cashwell called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00 a.m. Eastern time and welcomed all in attendance. Secretary Cashwell again thanked everyone for their service and work on the Task Force.

Secretary Cashwell took a moment to introduce Secretary Elizabeth Biser, who was recently appointed as Secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality. Secretary Biser noted that the work of the Task Force is not only important to her, but central to the work of the Department of Environmental Quality.

Secretary Cashwell also specifically thanked Catherine Rivera for all of her work and efforts in keeping the Task Force on track and moving through the transition period from former Secretary Mabelle Sanders' leadership.

Secretary Cashwell noted that Governor Cooper had recently established the nation's first Office of Digital Equity and Literacy within the North Carolina Department of Information Technology. The new office will execute Governor Cooper's plan to achieve digital equity and expand digital literacy offerings across North Carolina, which matches up with many of the recommendations of the Task Force.

Roll Call; Vote by Roll Call

Secretary Cashwell asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Gregory Richardson so moved, and the motion was seconded by T. Anthony Spearman.

Catherine Rivera, Boards and Commissions Coordinator, NC Department of Administration, asked for a roll call and vote on the August meeting minutes and indicated a quorum was not present. Secretary Cashwell noted that, other than the minutes, there were no items to vote on for approval. Accordingly, Secretary Cashwell stated that the Task Force could proceed forward with the meeting.

Subcommittee Reports

Secretary Cashwell stated that in order to ensure adequate time for reporting, discussion and collaboration, she would be moving the subcommittee reports to the beginning of the meeting. The Task Force proceeded to provide subcommittee reports.

Access to Healthcare Subcommittee

Dr. Giselle Corbie-Smith, chair of the Access to Healthcare subcommittee, noted that the subcommittee reviewed the status of recommendations submitted to the Task Force and decided to give priority to recommendations that could be more readily implemented. The first priority is to increase opportunities for patients to use telehealth services. The second priority is increasing investments in rural hospitals, community health centers and federally qualified health centers so that as we emerge from the pandemic we are able to provide quality healthcare. Dr. Corbie-Smith also asked for support from the Task Force in its efforts to increase opportunities for historically marginalized populations to participate in state government affairs to ensure that policies put forward demonstrate transparency and trustworthiness. She also noted that they continue to support Medicaid expansion.

Nick Galvez, Rural Hospital Program Manager of the North Carolina Office of Rural Health, introduced himself as a new member of the Access to Healthcare subcommittee. Mr. Galvez also noted that the subcommittee is working with the rural health clinics that are a subset of the federally qualified health centers.

Dr. Viviana Martinez-Bianchi, a member of the Access to Healthcare subcommittee, highlighted the importance of improving access to primary healthcare, noting that a lot of people are not trusting vaccines because they are not linked to primary healthcare providers that they trust.

Economic Opportunity and Business Development Subcommittee

Representative Yvonne Holley, chair of the Economic Opportunity and Business Development subcommittee, noted that the subcommittee is planning to move forward with the memorandum of understanding that will commit companies in North Carolina and those coming to North Carolina to help teach, develop, utilize and support HBCU vendors. The subcommittee believes it is a point where the memorandum of understanding will need to be reviewed by the State attorney and the Department of Commerce to determine how much can be implemented and what is needed to move it forward. The subcommittee has also prepared inclusionary language for bids and proposals to the State of North Carolina, which they would like to see included in policies that enhance the use of historically underutilized businesses. Representative Holley noted that the third point of focus for the subcommittee is identifying funding sources. She noted that the subcommittee is analyzing ways to access American Recovery Plan funding to advance the subcommittee's goals. For example, Representative Holley stated that some of the American Recovery Plan funding could go to nonprofits, like Community Development Financial Institutions for capital needs.

Representative Holley also noted that the subcommittee has begun meeting with some of the purchasing departments to review procedures that could be modified to get more HUB participation. These procedure changes would not require legislation that policy changes would. The subcommittee is also analyzing existing draft legislation to determine if there are any items that could be supported and encouraged by the subcommittee. Finally, the subcommittee is also looking at workforce development, and coordinating with the Department of Commerce to get some vendors to work more closely with HUBs.

Dr. Corbie-Smith noted that the issues around economic development, workforce development and procurement are particularly relevant as the Task Force thinks about hospitals and healthcare systems as anchor institutions, and how we can leverage the purchasing and employment power of anchor institutions around workforce development. She notes that this is one example where the subcommittees' recommendations may overlap and have some synergies.

Educational Opportunity Subcommittee

Sa'Metria Jones, Staff Liaison to the Educational Opportunity subcommittee, stated that the subcommittee has been focused on developing the digital literacy toolkit. The subcommittee has been working with the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources to expand the existing toolkit, which was created pre-COVID, but has been administered virtually since the pandemic has started. The subcommittee recommendation was to identify what the toolkit currently offers and expand it to targeted libraries that have demographics that the Task Force has been focused on. So far, they have targeted 3 counties and have discussed the resources needed to administer the toolkit, either virtually or in a hybrid format. The subcommittee was also able to secure \$650,000 in funds to aid in administering the toolkit.

Ms. Jones noted that the subcommittee has focused on the toolkit to maintain its momentum, but they have other goals, including, its financial literacy recommendation, which will require some legislative action. The subcommittee also has recommendations regarding the development of health literacy councils and establishing a health literacy coordinating council, which will require additional research and resources.

Environmental Justice and Inclusion Subcommittee

Carolina Fonseca Jimenez, staff liaison to the Environmental Justice and Inclusion subcommittee, stated that the subcommittee continues to focus on its 3 main objectives. The first objective is Short Term Goal #1, which is to evaluate the feasibility and/or designate a permanent full-time position on environmental justice, equity and inclusion in the Department of Commerce, Department of Transportation, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources and the Office of Emergency Management. This recommendation is in the Governor's proposed budget.

The second objective is Short Term Goal #2, which is to conduct an inventory on aging infrastructure and buildings (e.g., schools and senior centers) that have exposure to radon, asbestos and mildew and consider remediation projects of impacted buildings for job creation initiatives. The subcommittee is engaging in conversations with Robeson and Edgecombe county superintendents, and is evaluating various programs that the community colleges can have that will contribute to job creation for remediation.

The third objective is Long Term Goal #1, which is to support a legislative strategy to identify additions and changes to statutes and rules to incorporate environmental justice criteria into regulatory actions. The subcommittee is working on facilitating public involvement through listening sessions.

Patient Engagement Subcommittee

Cornell Wright, chair of the Patient Engagement Subcommittee, stated that its goal of strengthening medical school admission pipeline programs has been a primary focus of the subcommittee. The subcommittee has been considering how to roll out these programs, including bringing the right partners to the table. In terms of shifts in priority, the subcommittee has identified the need to broaden the scope of pipeline programs from medical schools to all health professions. The subcommittee is also giving attention to how it can support strengthening medical and sick leave policies for essential workers.

Post Report Recap and Debrief Session

Secretary Cashwell introduced Evin L. Grant, Policy Director, NC Department of Administration, as the presenter of the meeting's discussion regarding a recap of the report to Governor Cooper.

Mr. Grant reminded the members of the Task Force that recordings of the meetings are available on the Task Force's website and they can be shared with the members' networks to keep people informed of what the Task Force is doing and has done. Mr. Grant first provided an overview of the Task Force's guiding principles, which include putting people first, ensuring sustainability of efforts, making efforts adaptable to change and scalable to needs and ensuring transparency and accountability.

Mr. Grant also provided an overview of the Task Force's goals that are already in an implementation stage, including, digital access initiatives (e.g., telemedicine, digital literacy and telehealth), HBCU pipeline expansion, HUB training initiatives, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives (e.g., position creation and position expansion). He also noted that there were areas identified for further support, including educational opportunity for establishing a statewide health literacy coordinating council and corresponding regional health literacy councils as consistent with the Area Health

Education Model, supporting funding the efforts to remediate the environmental issues in public schools and ensuring and strengthening medical sick leave policies for essential workers, particularly those with historically marginalized backgrounds.

Mr. Grant noted that they have also explored a few other areas, including how to make meetings more efficient, the partnership with RTI, the Business Engagement Group and the Policy Implementation/Development Plan.

Finally, Mr. Grant highlighted next steps. He stated that the next Governor's report is due in December 2021. The Task Force is planning to continue holding monthly subcommittee meetings and they will be scheduling subcommittee chair meetings. Mr. Grant noted that the next full Task Force meeting will be in October 2021 from 10:00 a.m. until Noon.

Secretary Cashwell thanked Mr. Grant for his presentation.

Closing Remarks

Secretary Cashwell noted that there will be press briefing today at 1:30 p.m. with Governor Cooper, where he may announce the new incentive for people to get their COVID vaccination. There will be a \$100 gift card to incentivize people to get their first vaccination shot and a smaller card for people who drive people to get their shots.

Secretary Cashwell thanked all the staff and agency on the call, as well as RTI for their participation in the meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 11:29 a.m. Eastern time.