



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

**Wednesday, December 2, 2020
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, December 2, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. Eastern time via a virtual Microsoft Teams meeting.

Leadership Present

Secretary Machel Sanders (Chair)

Members Present

(Unless otherwise noted below, all members joined the videoconference at the opening of the meeting at approximately 10:02 a.m. and all members exited the videoconference by approximately 11:57 a.m. when the meeting was closed.)

Andres Henao
Annette Taylor
Anthony Spearman
Ben Money
Carlos Rish
Catherine Harvey Sevier
CC Lamberth
Charlene Green
Cornell Wright
Dale Jenkins
Donny Lambeth
Gene Woods (Designee: Fernando Little)
Giselle Corbie-Smith
Gregory Richardson

James Johnson Jr.
John Lumpkin
Juvencio Rocha Peralta
Lynn Bottone
Margaret Weller-Stargell
Michael Regan (Designee: Carolina Fonseca Jimenez)
Pat Martinez
Quinny Sanchez Lopez
Sonya Richardson
Trey Rabon
Viviana Martinez-Bianchi
Yvonne Holley

Members Absent

Adriana Chavela
Andres Henao
Cedric Bright
Christy Clayton
Johnathan Augustine
Kevin J. Price

Lenora Campbell
Rhett Brown
Stephanie McGarrah
Walter Baucom
Yazmin Garcia-Rico

Others Present

Jenny Black, Chair of the Council for Women Advisory Board and CEO and President of Planned Parenthood South Atlantic

Tammie Hall (Staff Liaison to Economic Opportunity & Business Development Subcommittee)
Guadalupe Jimenez (Staff Liaison to Environmental Justice and Inclusion Subcommittee)
Sa'Metria Jones (Staff Liaison to Educational Opportunity Subcommittee)
Catherine Rivera (Staff Liaison to Patient Engagement Subcommittee)
Emily Roach (Staff Liaison to Access to Healthcare Subcommittee)
Justin Truesdale (Secretary)

Call to Order; Welcome

Secretary Machel Sanders, Chair of the Task Force, called the meeting to order at approximately 10:02 a.m. Eastern time and welcomed all in attendance. Secretary Sanders thanked everyone for all their work so far and informed the Task Force that the report was submitted to Governor Cooper on December 1, 2020.

Roll Call; Vote by Roll Call

Secretary Sanders asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. John Lumpkin so moved, and the motion was seconded by Cornell Wright.

Catherine Rivera, Boards and Commissions Coordinator, NC Department of Administration, asked for a roll call and vote on the meeting minutes and indicated a quorum was present and the meeting minutes have been approved.

Presentation Regarding Exploiting Inequity

Emily Roach, Staff Liaison to Access to Healthcare Subcommittee, introduced Annette Taylor, a member of the Task Force and Vice-Chair of the Council for Women Advisory Board. Ms. Taylor introduced Jenny Black, Chair of the Council for Women Advisory Board and CEO and President of Planned Parenthood South Atlantic, to share findings from their report, Exploiting Inequity: A Pandemic's Gendered and Racial Toll on the Women and Families of North Carolina.

Ms. Black noted the Council for Women Advisory Board's primary work product is the issuance of regular status of women reports, which measure quality of life for women in North Carolina, including a health and wellness report, an economic and earnings report and a political participation report. Collectively, these reports paint a picture, which shows there is a lot of room for improvement in North Carolina. North Carolina has ranked towards the bottom of states and sometimes earns Cs and Ds in quality of life categories. Even before the pandemic, these reports highlighted that women in North Carolina, and particularly women of color, face deep disparities.

With regards to health and safety, some key findings from the report were that (i) COVID-19 had a disproportionate impact on women, (ii) women faced additional caregiving responsibilities and (iii) women had increased safety concerns from domestic violence and a surge in hate crimes, threats of voter intimidation, and risk of deportation. The primary policy recommendations that came out of these findings were to expand Medicaid, mandate paid leave and sustain CARES Act level funding for domestic violence and sexual assault and provide emergency support for child welfare.

On the topic of the economy and education, some key findings from the report were that (i) women had disproportionate rates of unemployment, (ii) there was increased food and housing insecurity for women and people of color, (iii) there was increased instability for women and minority owned businesses and (iv) there were school closures and lack of access to educational resources for children in rural areas. The primary policy recommendations that came out of these findings were to invest in the care economy

(e.g., paid leave, childcare affordability policies), adequately protect and compensate essential workers, including women, increase public and private sector investment in women- and minority-owned business and provide technical assistance to women, and develop a coherent, statewide strategy for safe and effective schooling.

With regards to civic and political life, some key findings from the report were that women experienced increased threats of violence and exposure to COVID-19 and had concerns of voter intimidation and suppression, however, women are engaging politically and succeeding despite the odds. The primary policy recommendations that came out of these findings were to increase representation of women and Black, Indigenous, Latinx and People of Color and attention to their rights in North Carolina's pandemic response, and to increase compensation for legislators.

In the category of innovation in the face of devastation, some key findings from the report were that women benefited from (i) the flexibility of tele-working, (ii) the removal of the commute, and (iii) increasing availability of remote/virtual services (e.g., church, court, health visits, etc.). The primary policy recommendations that came out of these findings were to create employer incentives to support teleworking for employees, institute policies that promote paid leave and child/elder/disability care incentives, make improvements in North Carolina's unemployment eligibility, benefits and duration, and apply a gender and racial equity lens to all response and recovery policies and practices.

Representative Donny Lambeth noted that he thought the legislative pay comment was important, however, many legislatures are in fear of pushing for this due to political consequences in the next election. Without it, you end up with more retired members with other forms of income or lawyers with firms that subsidize the time commitment.

Juvenio Rocha Peralta asked how many of the 42 women interviewed were Latina. Ms. Black noted that there was an annex to the report listing those interviewed and there were three Latina women interviewed.

Pat Martinez asked whether the decrease in women-owned businesses was focused in particular areas. Ms. Black noted that the 25% decrease in women-owned businesses was a national statistic, and she was not sure which areas were hardest hit. However, Ms. Black noted that the women interviewed for the report indicated that North Carolina was experiencing similar effects. Ms. Taylor noted that she suspects the service industry was hardest hit for women-owned businesses.

Catherine McDowell noted that many of the non-profit organizations in our state are women-owned and smaller non-profit organizations were not allowed to apply for PPP loan and business funding.

Lyric Thompson noted that the data that is quoted throughout the report breaks down demographics by race and ethnicity where that data is available. However, for many of the indicators the Council wanted to track, disaggregated data was not available. Accordingly, the Council recommended that all agencies collect and disaggregate data at a minimum by race by gender, if not all demographic streams, and publicize that information in one place as it is currently publicized on multiple agency websites.

Secretary Sanders thanked Ms. Black for her presentation and the work she is doing. Secretary Sanders noted that, unfortunately, it is not surprising what was found in the report and believes that the State not only can do better, but is better than that. Secretary Sanders reminded everyone that this is not a women's issue, but an issue that impacts everyone in our State.

Break & Transition to Break Out Groups

Ms. Roach noted that the Department of Administration released an RFP today for a policy implementation plan coordinator. The project will result in monthly deliverables including actionable recommendations for DOA and for members of the Task Force related to the Task Force's 2020 policy recommendations. Once the project is awarded, the firm will coordinate with staff liaisons and leads from subcommittees to ensure their policy implementation plan supports the policies recommended by the Task Force.

Ms. Roach stated that the purpose of today's breakout session is to determine specific action items to accomplish by the next meeting on January 13, 2021, that will help move policies forward. The Task Force should be able to announce the firm or individual that will support the Task Force with this work during the January meeting.

The Task Force took a 10 minute break and reconvened in breakout subcommittee meetings from 11:00 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.

Subcommittee Reports

The Task Force reconvened following the breakout subcommittee meetings at 11:30 a.m. Ms. Rivera asked for subcommittee reports and updates.

Access to Healthcare Subcommittee

Ms. Roach, staff liaison to the Access to Healthcare subcommittee, noted that the group decided to focus on utilization of telehealth services and broadband expansion. Ms. Roach stated that the subcommittee intends to ensure that CARES Act funds that must be spent by December 30, 2020 are in fact used in support of broadband expansion and digital literacy training in connection with AARP.

In terms of Medicaid expansion, the subcommittee noted that this is the top item for the Task Force, but focused on short-term goals that could be achieved by the next Task Force meeting.

Representative Lambeth noted that he thought there was a high likelihood of progress on legislation to support utilization of telehealth services. He also informed the Task Force that Governor Cooper has formed a Task Force of legislatures, both in favor of and opposed to Medicaid Expansion, to try to reach a resolution.

Economic Opportunity and Business Development Subcommittee

Rep. Yvonne Holley, the chair of the Economic Opportunity and Business Development subcommittee, noted that the subcommittee would like to focus on progress in the implementation of a Tier I and Tier II subcontracting plan prior to the next Task Force meeting.

Trey Rabon further stated that the subcommittee would be working on apprenticeship programs for diverse suppliers in connection with Carolinas AGC and the NC HUB office to cultivate and amplify some of the work that they are doing.

Dale Jenkins noted that the subcommittee would also be working to increase economic incentives to encourage HUB participation, and would also be working with the Department of Commerce and EDPNC to encourage them to look at a wide set of criteria when they provide incentives for businesses to relocate to North Carolina.

Educational Opportunity Subcommittee

Sa'Metria Jones, staff liaison to the Educational Opportunity subcommittee, stated that the subcommittee would focus on the priority of developing a toolkit for digital literacy that would be available to students and their families in their native language. The North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources is working on something similar, so the first action item prior to the next Task Force meeting is to arrange a meeting with the individuals at the NCDNCR to understand their progress and collaborate. In terms of the subcommittee's long-term goals, the subcommittee is looking to determine ways to increase funding for area health centers, as well as strategies to improve diversity in the healthcare workspace.

Environmental Justice and Inclusion Subcommittee

Guadalupe Jimenez, staff liaison to the Environmental Justice and Inclusion subcommittee, noted that the subcommittee is planning to focus on an inventory of aging infrastructure that has exposure to asbestos, radon and mildew and consider remediation projects for job creation initiatives. The subcommittee plans to detail the problems with these "sick buildings" and offer a holistic solution that fixes the buildings, and turns them into green spaces that support job creation in the communities where they are located. Dr. James Johnson is leading the subcommittee's efforts in these areas.

Patient Engagement Subcommittee

Cornell Wright, the chair of the Patient Engagement subcommittee, noted that the subcommittee is looking to capture demographic data in its totality for health agencies and create a toolkit that is culturally and linguistically competent. The subcommittee is planning to build on what Atrium currently has in place. Fernando Little will lead this effort.

Closing Remarks

Secretary Sanders noted that when the Task Force began the goal was to take action and not just talk, and she believes we have done that, but have a lot more to do. Secretary Sanders thanked everyone for their work and wished everyone a peaceful and joyous holiday season.

Secretary Sanders further stated that she believes in the safety and efficacy of the announced vaccines and that we should all support it and know that hope is around the corner to stomp out COVID-19.

Cornell Wright moved to adjourn the meeting, and it was seconded by Dr. Charlene Green.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 11:57 a.m. Eastern time.