



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

**Wednesday, July 14, 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, July 14, 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 11:31 a.m. when the meeting was closed.)

Andres Henao  
Annette Taylor  
Carlos Rish  
Carolina Fonseca Jimenez  
Catherine Harvey Sevier  
Cedric Bright  
Charlene Green  
Christy Clayton  
Cornell Wright  
Dale Jenkins  
Gene Woods (Designee: Fernando Little)  
James Johnson Jr.

John Lumpkin  
Juvencio Rocha Peralta  
Lenora Campbell  
Pat Martinez  
Quinny Sanchez Lopez  
Sonyia Richardson  
Stephanie McGarrah  
T. Anthony Spearman  
Trey Rabon  
Walter Baucom  
Yazmin Garcia-Rico

#### **Members Absent**

Adriana Chavela  
CC Lamberth  
Donny Lambeth  
Giselle Corbie-Smith  
Gregory Richardson  
Johnathan Augustine

Kevin J. Price  
Lynn Bottone  
Margaret Weller-Stargell  
Rhett Brown  
Viviana Martinez-Bianchi  
Yvonne Holley

#### **Others Present**

Deputy Secretary David Elliott, Deputy Secretary for Advocacy, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, 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 also thanked everyone for the service and work on the Task Force.

Secretary Cashwell introduced two new employees with the Department of Administration, Evin Grant as the new Policy Administrator and Bailey Recktenwald as the new Policy Analyst.

### **Roll Call; Vote by Roll Call**

Secretary Cashwell asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Dr. Christy Clayton so moved, and the motion was seconded by John Lumpkin.

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

### **Biannual Report; Vote by Roll Call**

Secretary Cashwell noted that given the change in leadership she was extremely proud of the achievements of the Task Force over the last 6 months and excited about the future action items included in the biannual report to Governor Cooper.

Secretary Cashwell asked if there were any questions or comments about the biannual report. Pat Martinez noted that she appreciated the efforts and urgency of Secretary Cashwell and her team.

Secretary Cashwell asked for a motion to approve the biannual report. Pat Martinez so moved, and the motion was seconded by Cedric Bright.

Ms. Rivera asked for a roll call and vote on the biannual report and indicated the report has been approved.

Secretary Cashwell thanked Ms. Rivera and noted the staff members that have joined the Task Force meeting.

### **EJ&I Policy Recommendation#4 Implementation Sprint**

Secretary Cashwell introduced Deputy Secretary David Elliott, Deputy Secretary for Advocacy, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, NC Department of Administration, as the facilitator of the meeting's first discussion.

Dr. Johnson provided an overview of the Environmental Justice and Inclusion Subcommittee Recommendation #4, which is to support expansion of the inventory and remediation process demonstrated by Short-Term Goal #2, to include other types of infrastructure, such as housing, courthouses, and other

public buildings in environmental justice communities. Dr. Johnson noted two critical equity issues, which include the sick buildings problem and the child care deserts problem.

The sick school building problem relates to school buildings with legacy pollutants, aging HVAC systems, impacts from adverse weather events and proximity to other negative environmental locations. Dr. Johnson noted that in the intervention framework, they are looking to grow a green business community of underutilized businesses to help with this remediation work. In preparing the intervention framework, they have also identified the occupations needed to fix the sick school buildings to drive workforce training in those directions.

Dr. Johnson noted that the child care desert problem has only been exacerbated by COVID-19. Some of the grim statistics that have been caused by the pandemic are that 2.3 million women left the labor force and 10% of child care centers closed for good during the pandemic. The lack of child care only increases the issues that businesses are having in getting employees back to work.

With regards to a framework for addressing the child care crisis, Dr. Johnson notes that we could create community land trusts (non-profit, community-based housing programs designed to promote housing affordability for low income families) with abandoned or vacant property in these child care desert locations to provide in-house/on-site child care facilities. Dr. Johnson notes that by taking these steps and making these investments, NC could have a more stable workforce and, as a result, more tax revenue.

Deputy Secretary Elliott opened the floor for questions. Dr. Charlene Green noted the intersection of climate change (increased energy costs and pollution) and its impact on health in communities. Dr. Green noted that if we want to build a strong, educated next generation, we need to also focus on these environmental issues.

Deputy Secretary Elliott noted that there are certain stakeholders that could contribute to the subcommittee's goal, including state agencies. Dr. Johnson noted that the connections have not yet been made, but welcomes a collaboration with the Department of Transportation. John Lumpkin noted that one of BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina Foundation's focus areas is early childhood childcare and education, and that they are specifically looking at the early childcare workforce. Judykay Jefferson from the NC Community College Systems noted that NC has endless opportunities for online training and education for childcare workers and those needed to do the remediation building and work.

Dr. Catherine Harvey Sevier stated that there is an opportunity to do some early childhood work around health and urges the Task Force to find the federally qualified health centers in the communities that are one of the sources for care for underfunded individuals. Dr. Sevier also noted that the UNC Pembroke School of Nursing has been working to get COVID-19 vaccines distributed and Dr. Sevier encourages the Task Force to use them as a resource to build healthcare into these endeavors.

Dr. Johnson asked everyone as they reflect on the discussion, that they send their ideas to him. He believes this is a problem that crosses many areas, so welcomes all thoughts. Dr. Johnson also noted that he will provide the slides to the Task Force.

Dr. Green noted that Dr. Johnson's work has been going on for 20 years, and we need to push forward with policies and legislation to accomplish the things he has been highlighting for so long.

Secretary Cashwell thanked Dr. Johnson for his presentation.

### **Subcommittee Reports**

The Task Force proceeded to provide subcommittee reports.

#### Access to Healthcare Subcommittee

Dr. Sevier, a member of the Access to Healthcare subcommittee, noted that they met to review the final report and focused on recommendations around telehealth and access and investment in hospitals and community health centers in rural areas. Dr. Sevier stated that they discussed the impact of COVID-19 on chronically ill patients with non-communicable diseases (e.g., diabetes, high blood pressure, etc.) and noted they are concerned that there is now a lack of care for those patients. The subcommittee discussed working with grassroots organizations to bring their voices to these conversations. The subcommittee also continues to push for Medicaid expansion

#### Educational Opportunity Subcommittee

Pat Martinez, chair of the Educational Opportunity subcommittee, noted that the subcommittee continues to work with the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources to expand the existing digital literacy toolkit. The toolkit has been administered remotely for the past year, but now that can be done virtually, in-person or via a hybrid model in order to meet people where they are. The subcommittee is interested in expanding the toolkit to additional libraries and is working to identify relevant libraries.

Ms. Martinez noted that the subcommittee is considering the recommendations for the allocation of the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund, including towards in person digital navigators, devices and community incentives. The next step is to expand the digital literacy educational toolkit into the health area.

#### Environmental Justice and Inclusion Subcommittee

Carolina Fonseca Jimenez, staff liaison to the Environmental Justice and Inclusion subcommittee, noted that their main focus has been Long Term Goal #1, which is to determine a legislative strategy to identify additions and changes to statutes and rules to incorporate environmental justice criteria into regulatory actions. They are working to identify funding needs and available resources to support the series of listening session. The subcommittee is also gathering information regarding future legislative schedules so that they can be prepared to file as needed. Finally, the subcommittee continues to elaborate on potential listening session structures and timelines.

The next subcommittee meeting is July 21 and they are meeting every third Wednesday from 10-11 and invite others to attend.

#### Patient Engagement Subcommittee

Cornell Wright, chair of the Patient Engagement Subcommittee, noted that the subcommittee had a few conversations recently that centered on what is being done in the medical education pipeline and also engaged with the issue of communication equity. The subcommittee sees a need to get more diverse students of color into the medical profession pipeline, but also needs to improve communication with respect to a broader audience, including the disabled community.

#### Economic Opportunity and Business Development Subcommittee

Director Tammie Hall, staff liaison of the Economic Opportunity and Business Development subcommittee, stated that Dr. Johnson's presentation aligns with a number of items the subcommittee has focused on, and is happy to provide information about where the businesses are that can help address the

sick school buildings issue and work needed. Director Hall noted a significant decrease in minority-owned businesses in light of COVID-19 and highlighted the need for recovery to drive sustainability for the businesses that exist and what can be further built. Director Hall stated that the top 3 initiatives for the subcommittee are workforce development, apprenticeship and development of a Tier I/Tier II subcontracting program.

### Business Engagement Group

Justin Truesdale, Secretary of the Task Force, provided an update on the Business Engagement Group, noting that he recently sent a draft of the Business Engagement Group's proposed Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Best Practices to Catherine Rivera. As previously noted, the Best Practices cover five identified programs (i) Diversity and Inclusion Mentoring Programs, (ii) Diversity and Inclusion Training, (iii) Employee Business Resource Groups, (iv) Diversity Recruiting and Hiring and (v) Supplier Diversity Programs. The document also includes contact information at various North Carolina companies, including AT&T, Curi, Duke Energy and PNC if interested companies wanted to reach out for more information or practical guidance on implementing some or all of these practices.

### Closing Remarks

Betty Marrow-Taylor, provided an overview of the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Strategic Plan. Ms. Marrow-Taylor noted that they are at the stage of rolling out the plan and there will be a virtual town hall meeting regarding the plan on July 20, 2021 from 2:00 to 3:00.

Cornell Wright reminded everyone of the seriousness of the Delta variant that is spreading and told everyone to be very cautious of how we proceed to avoid moving back to the restrictions that we had last year. He also noted that there many children who have started school or will be starting school soon who are unable to be vaccinated. So, anything we can do as adults to help stop the spread, let's please do that.

Secretary Cashwell noted that the next meeting is August 4. Secretary Cashwell also reminded everyone that the Executive Order that created the Task Force stated that the Task Force should meet monthly so long as the state of emergency was in place, and it still is. She noted that the Task Force could decide whether to move to less frequent meetings and will discuss that at the next meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 11:31 a.m. Eastern time.