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, October 6, 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 10:01 a.m. and all members exited the videoconference by approximately 11:42 a.m. when the meeting was closed.)

- Carlos Rish
- Catherine Harvey Sevier
- Cedric Bright
- Cornell Wright
- Elizabeth Biser
- Gene Woods (Designee: Fernando Little)
- Giselle Corbie-Smith
- Gregory Richardson
- John Lumpkin
- Juvencio Rocha Peralta
- Kevin J. Price
- Lenora Campbell
- Pat Martinez
- Quinny Sanchez Lopez
- Sonyia Richardson
- Trey Rabon (left the meeting at 11:29 pm)
- Viviana Martinez-Bianchi
- Yazmin Garcia-Rico

**Members Absent**
- Adriana Chavela
- Andres Henao
- Annette Taylor
- CC Lamberth
- Charlene Green
- Christy Clayton
- Dale Jenkins
- Donny Lambeth
- James Johnson Jr.
- Johnathan Augustine
- Margaret Weller-Stargell
- Lynn Bottone
- Rhett Brown
- Stephanie McGarrah
- T. Anthony Spearman
- Walter Baucom
- Yvonne Holley

**Others Present**
- Jess Englert, Policy Director, Office of Governor Roy Cooper
- Evin L. Grant, Policy Director, NC Department of Administration
- Bailey Recktenwald, Policy Development Analyst, NC Department of Administration
- Alicia Lyon (Staff Liaison to Economic Opportunity & Business Development Subcommittee)
- Carolina Fonseca Jimenez (Staff Liaison to Environmental Justice and Inclusion Subcommittee)
Call to Order; Welcome

Secretary Pamela Cashwell called the meeting to order at approximately 10:01 a.m. Eastern time and welcomed all in attendance. Secretary Cashwell noted that there is a lot happening this month, including, Hispanic Heritage Month, Domestic Violence Awareness Month and Minority Enterprise Development Month.

Secretary Cashwell also informed the Task Force that Catherine Rivera has moved over to the Department of Commerce, and recognized all the work Ms. Rivera did to keep the Task Force moving during its transition period.

Roll Call; Vote by Roll Call

Secretary Cashwell asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Pat Martinez so moved, and the motion was seconded by Cedric Bright.

Bailey Recktenwald, Policy Development Analyst, NC Department of Administration, asked for a roll call and vote on the August meeting minutes and indicated a quorum was present and the meeting minutes have been approved.

Remarks from the Governor’s Office

Secretary Cashwell introduced Jess Englert, Policy Director, Office of Governor Roy Cooper. Ms. Englert thanked the Task Force on behalf of the Governor’s office for advancing the Task Force’s agenda, while recognizing that it takes a lot of energy to serve on any task force, especially one that is focused on addressing disparities in communities of color who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Ms. Englert noted that Governor Cooper is currently negotiating a budget with legislative leadership. The items address by Governor Cooper’s budget includes expanding Medicaid, ensuring all students regardless of background, circumstance, geography or race have access to a sound basic education and investing in clean and healthy communities for all people regardless of income level. The Governor understands that we may not get everything requested in the budget, but wants the Task Force to know that the Task Force’s work has had a direct impact on what he included in the budget proposal.

Ms. Englert also stated that the Governor’s office has been working with Secretary Cashwell, Evin Grant and Ms. Recktenwald to identify actionable items that are within the Governor office’s control. Ms. Englert also noted that the Governor’s office will take the feedback from the recent surveys into consideration in determining next steps for the Task Force.

Secretary Cashwell thanked Ms. Englert for her comments and reinforced the appreciation for all the Task Force members’ efforts.

Subcommittee Reports

The Task Force proceeded to provide subcommittee reports.
**Patient Engagement Subcommittee**

Cornell Wright, chair of the Patient Engagement Subcommittee, thanked Ms. Rivera for her work with the subcommittee and noted that her help has meant a lot. Dr. Wright also thanked Mr. Grant and Ms. Recktenwald for their support during the transition.

Dr. Wright stated that the subcommittee met recently and there are many updates to be shared, but they are still in process so not yet ready to be shared. As these items are further revamped and developed, the subcommittee will update the Task Force. Dr. Wright also noted that there is new equity leadership at the Department of Health and Human Services. On October 1, the new Chief Health Equity Officer, Victor Armstrong, and the new Assistant Secretary for Equity and Inclusion, Former State Senator Angela Bryant, came on board. Dr. Wright noted the excitement around the additions at HHS and how that work will overlap with the Task Force.

**Environmental Justice and Inclusion Subcommittee**

Secretary Elizabeth Biser, chair of the Environmental Justice and Inclusion subcommittee, noted that the subcommittee’s most recent focus was on 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 determined to have listening sessions regarding this goal and that the next best steps are to create a one-pager to help frame the discussion, identify defined outcomes and goals on what the subcommittee hopes to hear back, and prepare a protocol that ensures diverse input. One item the subcommittee specifically discussed was having sites where participants could come to participate in the listening sessions, particularly in areas with limited broadband internet access. Carolina Fonseca Jimenez, staff liaison to the subcommittee, added that the committee is looking forward to the listening sessions and ready to get this done.

Secretary Cashwell asked about a tentative timeline for the listening sessions. Ms. Jimenez noted that the subcommittee hopes to nail down the timeline at its next meeting later this month.

Juvencio Rocha Peralta noted that he knows there has been a lot outreach to the Latino community and asked what the response has been. Ms. Jimenez noted that they have had some support from the Latino community, but is still trying to continue that engagement. Ms. Jimenez stated that they have a few organizations they have worked with to aid in that engagement and hope to build upon that. Ms. Jimenez believes the next listening session will help to better connect the subcommittee to the community.

**Educational Opportunity Subcommittee**

Pat Martinez, chair of the Educational Opportunity subcommittee, thanked Charrise Hollingsworth, the staff liaison to the subcommittee for keeping them working and moving forward. Ms. Martinez noted that the subcommittee continues to work on the digital literacy toolkit and is moving towards implementation with the NCDNCR. The subcommittee has provided feedback on the training and curriculum materials and offered three sites with libraries for their expansion, as well as the most effective way to administer the program.

Ms. Martinez noted that the subcommittee is excited to work with other subcommittees working on telehealth, telemedicine initiatives and broadband availability, among other items. The subcommittee will continue to develop an action plan for its other goals to ensure progress over the next 6 months.
Charrise Hollingsworth, staff liaison to the subcommittee, also reiterated that while much of the subcommittee’s work has been focused on establishing the digital literacy toolkit, they are also focused on ensuring that the other identified goals are also advanced.

**Economic Opportunity and Business Development Subcommittee**

Kevin Price, a member of the Economic Opportunity and Business Development subcommittee, stated that the subcommittee has been busy. First, Trey Rabon has been working on a mentor/protégé program that will engage several corporations across the State. The subcommittee believes that by connecting diverse business with larger corporations that understand supplier diversity and inclusion, this will help diverse business across the state approve their economic standing. The subcommittee is also considering an inclusion goal that would be voluntary for corporations. Mr. Price noted that when new companies come to North Carolina, we talk about jobs created, but not engagement with diverse business in the State.

Mr. Price also noted that the subcommittee met with the NC Rural Center because they had been very involved in creating a Small Business Policy Task Force that has developed about 20 recommendations regarding policy items that will support diverse and small businesses across the state.

**Access to Healthcare Subcommittee**

Dr. Giselle Corbie-Smith, chair of the Access to Healthcare subcommittee, noted that the North Carolina Community Health Worker Initiative, which was one of the subcommittee’s priorities, will expand as part of the CDC’s National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion's Community Health Workers for COVID Response and Resilient Communities (CCR) initiative. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services was awarded a total of $9 million with $3 million per year distributed over the next three years. This initiative consists of two funded opportunities intended to put more trained community health workers in communities that have been hit hardest by COVID-19.

Dr. Corbie-Smith noted that community health workers are frontline public health workers who are trusted members of the community or who have a close understanding of the community. This trusting relationship enables community health workers to serve as a link between health, social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery. Dr. Corbie-Smith stated that the NC initiative stakeholders have included each of the following elements in the recommendations to create a sustainable infrastructure for community health workers in the state: (i) community health workers provide chronic disease care services, (ii) the inclusion of community health workers in team-based care models, (iii) core competencies for community health worker certification, (iv) community health workers are supervised by healthcare professionals, (v) standardized community health worker curriculum, (vi) there is Medicaid payment for community health worker services, (vii) specialty area certification and (viii) inclusion of community health workers in the development of their certification requirements.

Nicholas Galvez noted that the subcommittee talked about how hiring community health workers that represent the make-up of the community provide benefits of engaging patients and providing access to healthcare. Mr. Galvez noted that the Office of Rural Health has been working with the community healthcare workers to meet rural healthcare needs. These same workers can be used to meet the needs of patients in urban and rural communities.

Dr. Viviana Martinez-Bianchi noted that the Hispanic – Latinx community has been historically marginalized and seeing members of the community becoming knowledgeable about COVID-19 and being professionally trained has elevated the community and their opportunities.
Mr. Peralta agreed with Dr. Martinez-Bianchi’s comments and noted that in rural areas where there is a gap, we need to be intentional on how to reach these communities, and community health workers can help bridge that gap.

Business Engagement Group

Justin Truesdale, Secretary of the Task Force, stated that he has met with Mr. Grant and Ms. Recktenwald to discuss next steps and alignment of the Business Engagement Group with the Task Force. Mr. Truesdale noted that the Business Engagement Group is currently planning to have virtual conferences covering practices the group identified, including those related to (i) Diversity Recruiting and Hiring, (ii) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Mentor Programs & Supplier Diversity Programs, (iii) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training and (iv) Employee Business Resource Groups.

Mr. Truesdale noted that they are currently at the stage of determining appropriate panelists/speakers and working on language and scope to reach out to participants, and have discussed aiming to have the conferences in November. Depending on timing and the holidays that timing may be adjusted, but that is the current goal.

Policy Implementation Tracker Overview

Ms. Recktenwald provided an overview of the Policy Implementation Tracker, noting the color coding to indicate the current status (e.g., Completed (green), In Progress (yellow), In Progress, Awaiting External Action (orange) or Not Started (red)) of the Task Force’s recommendations. Ms. Recktenwald noted that items that are in progress are at various stages, including requiring on-going work by the subcommittees or consideration for adoption by the legislature.

Ms. Recktenwald noted that the Recommendation Agency/Point of Contact column identifies the point of contact needed to move the recommendations to a sustainable place and the Implementation Lever column indicates how the goal is to be accomplished (e.g., whether state law or executive order is required). The tracker also includes information summarizing the current progress of each of the listed recommendations that they intend to have updated on a periodic basis. Finally, the tracker includes a next steps column to indicate where the recommendations can go and continue to move forward.

One-Year Review Survey Report

Secretary Cashwell stated that a survey was sent to the Task Force members to get feedback on the Task Force following its first year. Only 19 of 37 members responded, so the results may be slightly skewed, but still informative.

Evin Grant provided the Task Force with an overview of the survey. Mr. Grant noted that the purpose was to assess Task Force member abilities and involvement, revisit priorities, review the makeup of subcommittees and consider the future of the Task Force. Mr. Grant noted that the responses indicated that many members see themselves as active participants or in an advisory/support role, while a few see themselves as observers and here to learn.

Mr. Grant noted that the responses indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a varying impact on the ability of members to accomplish the Task Force’s goals. In addition, the results show that the most important goals the Task Force should achieve are (i) expanding Medicaid, (ii) supporting community health centers and implementing telehealth and telemedicine initiatives, (iii) increasing opportunities for patients to utilize healthcare services, (iv) creating economic incentives to encourage participation with
Historically Underutilized Businesses, (v) supporting apprenticeships and workforce pipelines that create job growth and (vi) establishing mandatory, uniformed cultural methods of collecting demographic patient information, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender identity and sexual orientation, across all healthcare systems. The survey also indicated that the Task Force members believe the most achievable goals are (i) supporting apprenticeships and workforce pipelines that create job growth, (ii) establishing mandatory, uniformed cultural methods of collecting demographic patient information, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender identity and sexual orientation, across all healthcare systems., (iii) advocating for the NC General Assembly to pass a comprehensive budget that includes funding for HB 924, which provides for personal financial literacy for high school students, as well as a similar mandatory requirement for post-secondary institutions, (iv) establishing a statewide health literacy coordinating council and corresponding regional health literacy councils as consistent with the Area Health Education model, (v) increasing opportunities for patients to utilize healthcare services, (vi) offering educational support and mentorship to diverse businesses, leveraging partnerships with NC HBCUs to develop executive education programs available to minority-owned businesses doing business in the state and (vii) supporting community health centers and implementing telehealth and telemedicine initiatives.

Mr. Grant stated that the respondents to the survey mostly wanted to extend the Task Force beyond June 2022 in order to have more time to accomplish the Task Force’s goals. The survey also showed that most members would like the Task Force to meet every other month and the subcommittees to meet monthly. Mr. Grant also noted that some responses indicated that a Legislative Subcommittee should be added to the Task Force, as many of the goals will require legislative action.

Secretary Cashwell stated that the survey will be recirculated to the Task Force to give those who did not respond an opportunity to respond by Friday, October 8.

**Announcements and Closing Remarks**

Mr. Grant stated that the monthly full staff meeting is scheduled, but two of those may have to be rescheduled due to conflicts. Mr. Grant also noted that the subcommittee chair meetings will be scheduled soon as well. He also thanked those who distributed the Task Force intern application to their networks and they are moving forward with interviews. Mr. Grant asked all members to beginning thinking about their December report inserts. Finally, Mr. Grant stated that if members would like to move to a different subcommittee or serve on more than one subcommittee to reach out and let them know.

Secretary Cashwell thanked all the staff and agency on the call and for everyone’s work and efforts.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 11:42 a.m. Eastern time.