

**Disparities Elimination Committee**  
**Thursday, January 21, 2021**  
**9:30 – 10:30 a.m.**  
**Microsoft Teams Meeting**  
**Meeting Minutes**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Disparities Elimination Committee Members Present</b> |   |
| Dennis Anderson (Co-chair)                               | Tom Kennedy                                     |
| Raymel Givens  | Megan Mueller (Co-chair)                        |
| Alfredo Rincon-Gonzalez                                  | Nafula Namuninia                                |
| Cree Gordon  | Fred Ndip                                       |
| Teresa Jones   | Tyrie Stanley                                   |
| <b>Committee Members Absent:</b>                         | <b>Guests:</b>                                  |
| Charlotte Detournay                                      | James McMurray                                  |
|  | Brenda Senyana, Positively Hennepin Coordinator |
| <b>Hennepin County (Part A) Representative:</b>          | <b>DHS (Part B) Representative:</b>             |
| None   | Fred Ndip                                       |
| <b>MDH (Prevention) Representatives:</b>                 | <b>MCHACP Staff:</b>                            |
| None   | Carissa Weisdorf, Council Coordinator (minutes) |

Quorum Present? Yes

- I. **Welcome and introductions** Dennis Anderson called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and introductions were made.
  
- II. **Review, approval of minutes from November 19 meeting and proposed agenda**
  - The proposed agenda was approved by unanimous consent.
  - The minutes were approved by unanimous consent.
  
- III. **Update and discussion on Part A capacity building grant activities**
  - Brenda Senyana joined the meeting and introduced herself as the Positively Hennepin Implementation Coordinator. Positively Hennepin launched in 2016 and is the county's strategy to end the HIV epidemic.
  - Brenda highlighted [goal three](#) which is *engage and facilitate the empowerment of communities that the epidemic hits hardest*.
    - Goal three aims to stop new infections and reduce HIV disparities.
  - Work to achieve goal three includes partnering with community groups that reach target populations: African American same gender loving men, East African immigrants, West African immigrants, and faith leaders.
  - The groups receiving funding through the HRSA capacity building grant are:
    - Reverend Dewayne Davis, a faith leader, who is working on outreach and stigma reduction
    - Red Door Clinic, for engagement with African American same gender loving men
    - Sub-Saharan African Youth & Family Services in Minnesota (SAYFSM), for engagement with East Africans
    - West African HIV Task Force, to reach West African immigrants
  - Brenda said covid has had an effect on activities around community engagement; there was a shift to virtual communication from the more common in-person communication that was happening before covid.
    - Red Door Clinic is providing in-person services.

- In November and December, Red Door Clinic conducted focus group discussions in order to gain feedback on their services. They are compiling the results and will report them to staff. Will look at barriers to services and other feedback shared by participants to improve services at the clinic.
- Reverend Davis works with a lot of faith leaders in the Twin Cities and he is working on a virtual workshop to discuss the impact of HIV on African American same gender loving men, and to reduce stigma in the community.
- SAYFSM has continued to provide services to the East African community; including testing, a monthly newsletter, and distributing brochures to the community (for example, grocery stores that serve the East African community). SAYFSM has also worked with faith leaders and is a part of a faith leader network that is meeting virtually. The faith leader network increases awareness on HIV and engages faith leaders on providing services. SAYFSM is reaching out more virtually, through Facebook, Zoom, social media, local radio and tv stations, and talking about services related to testing, care, and treatment. They are also conducting focus groups around stigma which will help improve services.
- West African HIV Task Force is providing drive-through testing and HIV education to community members through written materials. Also do Facebook Live with faith leaders to increase awareness of HIV in the community and meet with community organizations to increase engagement with sports teams, men's groups, and to improve cultural competency around HIV testing.
- Tyrie Stanley asked how people who don't go to Red Door Clinic can participate in the focus groups. Brenda Senyana replied the focus groups have concluded now but there were fliers on virtual platforms to broaden the outreach. Brenda will let the council know if there is anything new planned for 2021.
- Dennis Anderson asked how else the African American same gender loving community is being engaged outside of faith groups.
  - Brenda Senyana said the key partners are engaging with their own faith leaders, often virtually. Reverend Davis is working to identify other faith leaders so he can bring this network together and increase awareness within their congregations.
  - Reverend Davis wants the African American same gender loving community to also connect on their own and there is a project underway.
  - Dennis Anderson said those who are not going to religious services are more disenfranchised; for example, homeless people and people trading sex for money or drugs. How do we connect with these groups? Brenda replied there is other work being done to target these groups, but this grant is specific to the target populations mentioned. The capacity building grant is small and focused on improving services at Red Door Clinic for African American same gender loving men, for example. Brenda said she can look into other ways Hennepin County is engaging with these populations and can provide more information.
- Tyrie Stanley is concerned that members of his community don't always access services at Red Door Clinic; he didn't hear about the focus groups at Red Door. Brenda Senyana said she will share this information with Red Door and feels the first focus groups made an impact.
  - Carissa Weisdorf mentioned that the information on the focus groups was also shared on the council Facebook page.

#### IV. Committee co-chair succession planning

- The committee discussed the upcoming committee co-chair election in March and determined a need for a member of the committee who is also a council member to run for co-chair at that time.
- Carissa referenced the ***Disparities Elimination Committee Co-Chair Position Description*** and encouraged people who are interested in the committee co-chair position to review the document.
- Dennis Anderson asked if anyone present is interested in running during the election in March.
  - Tyrie Stanley said he will run if other council members are not interested in the position. He encouraged other members to serve in this role so they can learn, and, expressed that the position it is not as hard as it may seem.
  - Tom Kennedy said he may be interested and will read through the position description.
  - James McMurray said he will consider it and said he has been interested in serving as a member of this committee. Carissa Weisdorf clarified that he will need to first become a community member of the committee by attending the three out of four meetings in a row.
  - Megan Mueller said she will consider serving as co-chair if no one else is interested but she is happy to give others the opportunity.
- It was mentioned that there will be new committee members starting in March, and they will also be eligible.
- At this time, it appears that enough eligible people are interested in the position, so no additional recruitment is needed.
- After the meeting, Teresa Jones also indicated she is interested in serving in this role.

#### V. **New Business/Unfinished business/Goal setting**

- Dennis Anderson brought up new business and said he would like to ensure a smooth transition for the next co-chair(s) and offered to have a separate meeting with any new co-chair after the March election to get them up to speed; especially if they have not previously served as a co-chair.
- Carissa Weisdorf brought up new business and said she is working on drafting the council and committee work plan for the next fiscal year which starts on March 1. She displayed ***FY 2021 Council and Committee Work Plan*** and indicated work plan items so far are based on legislative duties, roles and responsibilities in the bylaws, and any other work the council or committees has indicated an interest in working on.
  - She explained additional activities will be added to the work plan once the guidance for the next integrated plan is released by CDC and HRSA.
  - Tyrie Stanley asked to include updates from Part A about the work groups they convene, if they are still happening.
  - Tyrie Stanley also asked to receive the summary results from the focus groups conducted by the Red Door Clinic; Brenda Senyana indicated that this should be possible and will follow-up on the timeline for these results.
- Dennis Anderson brought up unfinished business and asked Carissa Weisdorf to connect him with Aaron Peterson about presenting data to the community.
- Nafula Namuninia shared that she is feeling unproductive in these meetings and hopes by creating a new meeting next month, things will turn around. Dennis encouraged all members to speak up and understands the desire to do meaningful work.

**VI. Set agenda for next meeting**

- Currently there is nothing on the work plan for February.
- Cree Gordon asked if there is any training committee members want, and said that they, or staff, could look it into it for the next meeting.
  - Nafula Namuninia said training would be helpful and would like this added in February.
  - Look at trainings or technical assistance (TA) that can help us do our work.
- Nafula Namuninia said hearing reports from partners is also helpful. She said it is helpful to know what our funded partners are doing to end disparities. Since funding is targeted, it is helpful to know where the gaps may be. She indicated that it is especially vital to hear about what work continues, despite many things on pause due to COVID-19.
  - Cree Gordon indicated an update on Fast-Track Cities could be possible for the next meeting. Cree could ask Sarah Schiele from the City of Minneapolis to present on the work that was done in the past year or the plan for the next year.
- Tyrie Stanley said it is helpful to him to know more about what services are paid for by Part A and Part B. Specifically, when Part A pays for a service, but it is contracted through Part B; and vice-versa.
  - Carissa Weisdorf informed the committee that there is a data training scheduled for the council on data sources.
  - The committee indicated interest in having a separate presentation to their committee to allow for more discussion.
  - Carissa Weisdorf discussed the need for a data request for this information and offered to work with members of the committee and the government representatives to do this. There was consensus from the committee to submit a data request.
  - Fred Ndip clarified that services that are directly funded by a government agency are contracted through RFPs and services that are indirectly funded are passed through to other government agencies through intergovernmental contracts and they administer the service.
- Carissa Weisdorf will take the ideas discussed today and send a survey to committee members about what they want to work on next month and in future months.

**VII. Announcements**

- There were no announcements.

**VIII. Adjourn**

- Dennis Anderson adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

**Meeting Summary:**

- The committee received an update on Part A capacity building grant activities.
- The committee reviewed the draft work plan for fiscal year 2021 and discussed new work plan items. A survey will be sent before the next meeting to prioritize items.
- Discussed committee co-chair succession planning.

**Documents distributed before the meeting:**

- Proposed agenda
- November 19 meeting minutes

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- Disparities Elimination Committee co-chair position description
- FY 2020 DEC work plan

**Additional documents displayed during the meeting:**

- FY 2021 council and committee work plan (draft)

**cw**