Office of Health Equity Advisory Committee Meeting
Teleconference Meeting Minutes (Approved)
June 15, 2021

826-6102-6870; Code 256052

OHE-AC Members Participating:

Sarah de Guia, Chair	Jo-Ann Julien
Shireen Malekafzali, Vice Chair	Simran Kaur
Califia Abwoon	Nahla Kayali
Kismet Baldwin	Patricia Lee
Angela Ball	Vong Mouanoutoua
Jessica Buendia	Hector Ramirez
Lisa Folberg	Nancy Rodriguez
Aaron Gardner	Terra Russell-Slavin
Ana Gonzalez Seda	Angelina Woodberry

Members Absent:

Valentine Antony
Robin Carter
Yvette McShan
Michael Witte

State Officials/Staff:

Rohan Radhakrishna, M.D., M.P.H., Deputy Director, OHE
Ana Bolanos, Assistant Deputy Director, OHE
Amanda Hooker, Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator, Office of Health Equity (OHE)
Jason Tescher, Chief, Gender Health Equity Unit (GHEU), OHE
Amy Zhang, COVID-19 Health Equity Program Specialist, OHE

Speakers from the Public:

Stacie Hiramoto
Audrey Prickett

9:00 a.m. Convene Meeting and Welcome | Roll Call | Agenda Review | Meeting Minutes

Welcome

Sarah de Guia, Chair of the Office of Health Equity (OHE) Advisory Committee (AC), called the OHE-AC meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., welcomed everyone, provided a brief overview of the meeting agenda, and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

Roll Call and Introductions

Chair de Guia welcomed new AC members Angela Ball, Hector Ramirez, Nancy Rodriguez, Terra Russell-Slavin, and Angelina Woodberry and asked them to introduce themselves.

Approve March 3, 2021, Meeting Minutes, and April 14, 2021, Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

> **MOTION**: Ms. Julien moved approval of the March 3, 2021, Office of Health Equity Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes and the April 14, 2021, Subcommittee Meeting Minutes as presented. Ms. Gonzales Seda seconded. Motion carried 14 yes, 0 no, and 4 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:
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> The following OHE-AC Members voted "Yes": Abwoon, Baldwin, Ball, Buendia, Folberg, Gardner, Gonzalez Seda, Julien, Kaur, Kayali, Lee, and Mouanoutoua, and Vice Chair Malekafzali and Chair de Guia.
>
> The following OHE-AC Members abstained: Ramirez, Rodriguez, Russell-Slavin, and Woodberry.

Public Comment

No members of the public addressed the OHE-AC.

9:15 a.m. COVID-19 and Equity Updates from CDPH Leadership

    Presenter:

- Rohan Radhakrishna, MD, MPH, Deputy Director, OHE

Chair de Guia stated the AC will hear updates from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) leadership regarding CDPH's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Department's equity priorities.

Rohan Radhakrishna, MD, MPH, Deputy Director, OHE, and Ana Bolanos, Assistant Deputy Director, OHE, introduced themselves.

Deputy Director Radhakrishna paused for a moment of silence to honor and celebrate the collective work today, California's reopening day, and also to mourn the lives of those who have been lost and harmed from the COVID-19 pandemic, violence, and discrimination in the past year.

Deputy Director Radhakrishna provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the state's COVID-19 pandemic response and the Department's equity priorities. He reviewed the equity workstream and milestones, state vaccinations, using data to inform an equity-driven response, the Vaccinate ALL 58 Campaign, how the Blueprint for a Safer Economy was equity-infused with a health equity metric, the COVID-19 Health Equity Playbook for Communities, and the CDPH Director's priorities including equity and antiracism. He stated, although numbers have largely improved over the past year,

severe disparities persist. There is deep work ahead to undo the impacts of colonialism, genocide, structural racism, poverty, and discrimination.

Deputy Director Radhakrishna reviewed the six areas of focus of the Health and Human Services Agency's California's Comeback Plan, under the leadership of Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly. The CDPH and the OHE with the AC's support, will be intimately involved in several of these areas including the Child and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative, the California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) Program, and envisioning and building a better public health system that is ready for future challenges.

Deputy Director Radhakrishna stated Tomas Aragon, MD, DrPH, Director and State Public Health Officer, CDPH, will be chairing a future work group with the aim of creating a memo to Secretary Ghaly to influence next year's budget on the public health funding that is needed for the state.

Deputy Director Radhakrishna asked for AC participation in a subgroup that he will be leading that will be focused on education of the public and community partnerships.

Deputy Director Radhakrishna stated Director Aragon announced his top three priorities: develop internally to become a learning and healing organization, performance management including lean, results-based accountability, and equity and anti-racism.

Discussion

Ms. Folberg stated the California Immunization Registry Medical Exemption (CAIR-ME) system results in a barrier for children because they must go through a medical exemption process if they do not have a vaccine card. This is a disservice for health equity for these mostly new immigrant families.

Mr. Gardner stated concern that the huge sums of federal COVID-19 relief funding must be spent within two years and about how changes can be sustained after that funding is gone. The pandemic demonstrated how serious gaps were and how underfunded public health was. A lot of the frustration in health care workers during this past year was that the ability to respond to COVID-19 was seriously compromised due to inadequate data systems.

Deputy Director Radhakrishna stated he has been participating in national meetings with directors of offices of health equity and minority health who have been discussing boom-and-bust cycle funding in public health and the fact that public health remains chronically underfunded. He stated people will begin to forget those serious gaps and public health issues beginning today with the reopening. He stated the need to remember so disproportionate consequences and underfunding will not continue to repeat with future pandemics and other hazards. He stated he will count on working with the AC to ensure that the federal funding is strategic and lasting.

Vice Chair Malekafzali stated an opportunity for the OHE on the Health in All Policies (HiAP) work is to advance the concept of community participatory budgeting. The processes learned will last beyond the funding. She encouraged maintaining a deep connection with and continuing to target funding, support, resources, and attention to the California Healthy Places Index (HPI). She asked for more information about the regional recovery specialists and equity liaisons.

Dr. Baldwin agreed about the need for ongoing funding for community-based organizations. She stated the funding does not necessarily need to flow through the CDPH but directly to those organizations so they can continue the good work and processes that have been implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Baldwin agreed with continuing to use the HPI, although it is skewed. This needs to be taken into consideration with funding not only for statewide quartiles but county-level quartiles as well. She suggested creating educational material to help counties begin to put together and implement health equity units. She asked how to get large health systems to incorporate an equity lens so that it does not fall solely to health departments to ensure that individuals most impacted are receiving needed services and booster vaccines.

Dr. Baldwin stated health equity should be included in grants so funding is being provided for it. She asked to incorporate health equity at the local level.

Public Comment

Stacie Hiramoto, Director, Racial and Equity Mental Health Disparities Coalition (REMHDCO), stated they trusted that the OHE will lead or at least be an integral part of the Child and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative. There are concerning questions in the community about whether community-defined practices will be included in the initiative. There is also a lack of specificity about the workforce that will be developed or how measurements and outreach will be done regarding individuals of color.

9:45 a.m. Office of Health Equity (OHE) and Health in All Policies (HiAP) Program Updates and Discussion
   Presenters:

   - Michael Jimenez, Health and Equity Program Associate, Strategic Growth Council (SGC)

   - Jessica Buendia, Deputy Director, SGC

   - Amy Zhang, COVID-19 Health Equity Program Specialist, OHE

   - Jason Tescher, Chief, Gender Health Equity Unit (GHEU), OHE

Chair de Guia stated the AC will hear an update from the HiAP Task Force on the results of their strategic planning survey and workplan development, and to give AC

Members a chance to ask questions or make comments on OHE Program written updates circulated before the meeting.

Presentations

Jessica Buendia, OHE-AC Member and Acting Executive Director, SGC, provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the role, key themes, and current activities of the SGC, including its Health and Equity Program (HEP) Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) / Capitol Collaborative on Race and Equity (CCORE), the SGC Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP), and the SGC Racial Equity Resolution.

Michael Jimenez, Health and Equity Program Associate, SGC, continued the slide presentation and provided an update on the background, purpose, and past focus areas of the HiAP Task Force. He reviewed the key informant interview and Community Priorities Survey results, workplan implementation, and ways to stay involved with HiAP. He stated the HiAP Task Force led a data-driven initiative housed within the CDPH called the Healthy Communities Framework, which summarizes the social determinants of health as identified by priorities from local communities throughout California.

Discussion

Mr. Ramirez asked if an accessibility analysis was part of the transition plan to in-person gatherings, particularly for community engagement, and whether it included trauma-informed spaces, especially for communities that have been severely impacted, and the digital divide, which impacts certain communities. These are important conversations that need to occur. The speaker stated reopening California is a good opportunity to make accessibility a transformative element.

Ms. Buendia stated the need to merge communities to cross-link between important issues and the work of the SGC.

Ms. Julien stated housing was the top priority brought out in this survey but noted that safety and climate change, which are also priority areas, have threads into the housing issues. She asked about future plans to address the housing issue at the SGC.

Ms. Buendia stated the SGC has the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program partnering with the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), which will be presenting later in the agenda. The SGC uses this program to think about how to align state priories into one programmatic activity and setting. The issues of housing and climate can be paired together but there are also natural tensions that emerge from trying to house individuals while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The SGC holds public forums to have these conversations. Housing has been identified as a priority for the state. There are many opportunities in the next budget cycle, which will be discussed later in the agenda.

Kirin Kumar, Interim Program Manager, SGC's Health and Equity Program, added that within SGC's funding program, the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program historically has included a tribal set-aside, recognizing the importance of supporting tribes and tribal-serving organizations and being able to address housing and climate change. This is an example of an opportunity identified and implemented

within the program. He agreed with prioritizing identifying new opportunities to further integrate racial and health equity within initiatives on housing statewide.

OHE Program Written Updates

Chair de Guia stated Ms. Hooker sent AC Members the OHE Program written updates as part of their meeting materials. She asked Ms. Zhang to present her report:

Amy Zhang, COVID-19 Health Equity Program Specialist, OHE, provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the COVID-19 Health Equity Pilot Projects Request for Applications (RFA) review process, applications received, priority populations, and the counties being covered by the 19 awardees, since some applicants cover multiple areas with their projects. Contracts are expected to be executed in the first two months of the fiscal year.

Jason Tescher, Chief, GHEU, OHE, welcomed new Gender Health Equity Specialist Amy Lanteigne. He provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the GHEU strategic planning process, survey results, key themes, and the draft GHEU goals and mission, vision, and value statements. More information on the activities of the GHEU and the other OHE Program Units can be found in the OHE Program written updates, which were included in the meeting materials.

Public Comment

No members of the public addressed the OHE-AC.

BREAK

10:50 a.m. Guest Presentations: Housing, Health, and Equity

Presenters:

- Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Deputy Secretary of Housing and Consumer Services, California Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency

- Josh Rosa, Policy and Program Support Manager, Department of Housing and Community Development

Chair de Guia stated the AC will hear guest presenters give an overview of the intersection between health, equity, and housing and the Governor's housing priorities.

Presentations

Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Deputy Secretary of Housing and Consumer Services, California Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency (BCSH), provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the Governor's key points on housing and homelessness, including homeowner and renter relief, legal assistance, increased housing production, ending and preventing homelessness, and supporting critical programs. She stated the Governor's May Budget Revise includes a $11.87 billion

investment to homelessness over the next two fiscal years – the largest investment to homelessness in California's history.

Josh Rosa, Policy and Program Support Manager, HCD, provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the causal relationships of ongoing programs between housing, health, and equity and how these understandings guide HCD's policies and programs. He discussed how safe and affordable housing improves health outcomes by relieving cost burdens, reducing commutes and improving accessibility, and ensuring safe conditions.

Discussion

Ms. Julien asked about residential housing codes and the public impact of residential heat in Southern California, when less than half the population has air conditioning. She noted that classic solutions are inaccessible for renters.

Mr. Rosa stated he will get back to Ms. Julien with more information after talking with the Codes and Standards team. He stated one of the ways the HCD works with other agencies is through the Adaptation Planning Guide, provided by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), about how to prepare for climate impacts including extreme heat.

Ms. Julian asked about the expected timeline for the changes to improve outcomes that were outlined in the presentations.

Ms. von Koch-Liebert stated changes are already being seen. Regulatory and financial assistance has been seen since 2017 in the housing space. An active legislative cycle was seen through 2019 resulting in regulation changes. Most of the new funding will become available in January with next year's budget. She stated she is reassured that all the work that has gone into substantial investments and regulatory improvements over the last four years are at the tipping point where more production should begin to be seen in this coming year.

Ms. Russell-Slavin stated a focus on multi-family, multi-unit housing can particularly impact LGBTQ individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who are less likely to reside in family units. This is particularly increased in LGBTQ seniors. She asked how the solutions being created will not further increase already-existing inequities.

Ms. von Koch-Liebert stated options create opportunities. True improvements in equity are being factored into many types of housing options. Community input is welcome to share experiences, lessons, and tools to bring about the best solutions.

Vice Chair Malekafzali asked if there are economic development requirements attached to the funding.

Ms. von Koch-Liebert stated state resources that are used for project development often come with many requirements for workforce development, using skill-and-trade labor, and including a public stakeholder process in the decisions around the funds. Economic development requirements depend more on the location.

Ms. Woodberry suggested being mindful of substandard housing in terms of space to avoid families with multiple children living in one-bedroom apartments since that is what they can afford. The COVID-19 pandemic forced individuals to be confined in small spaces for a long time with no break. This will have adverse impacts on mental health.

Ms. Abwoon stated her experience that the funding goes to state and county agencies but nothing happens for the individuals she advocates for. She asked how racial disparities and inequities that have been in communities for generations will be addressed.

Ms. von Koch-Liebert stated any one of the things organizations have had to contend with over the last couple of decades is not having necessary information. The statistics and data, although challenging, have not provided much to work with in terms of ensuring that resources were used in the most strategic, coordinated, and equity-focused way to see the outcomes needed to improve this issue.

Ms. von Koch-Liebert stated one of the projects she is most excited about is the Homeless Data Integrated System, which was launched a couple of months ago and is being run by the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC). This marks the first time that this state has been able to get granular-level information from local jurisdictions' continuums of care rolled out on a quarterly basis to look across jurisdictions and spending patterns that will answer questions about race and ethnicity outcomes, how funding is being delivered and spent, and outcomes on individuals experiencing homelessness. This tool will help ensure that services and outcomes are being delivered through state, local, and philanthropic dollars.

Ms. von Koch-Liebert stated the HCFC has just released its first action plan. This is the first time the state has looked across all of the different programs, services, and funding it is working with to ensure it makes sense and that there is a multi-year, holistic plan to ensure an equity-focused action plan around homelessness. These are the types of complex social challenges that require input from everyone who is part of that service delivery to ensure that everyone collectively gets it right.

Chair de Guia stated the AC would like to continue to engage in conversation about the ways to support the speakers in terms of having racial equity as a priority as opposed to just being embedded in some of the work.

Mr. Ramirez suggested utilizing an equity focus by targeting priorities that are most needed and targeting populations that are the most marginalized and impacted by disparities, such as migrant workers who have been essential during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. von Koch-Liebert stated her organization put a lot of thought into rental assistance delivery and prioritization of the resources. Resources have also been targeted at a larger than population-based percentage towards Black and Latinx communities. She welcomed a continued discussion on strategies used to deploy rental assistance to expand and think through that prioritization.

<u>Public Comment</u>

Audrey Prickett, Public Policy Intern, REMHDCO, stated the OHE is positioned to receive $63 million in the state budget to sustain the California Reducing Disparities Project (CRDP). It appears there is a new funding for the CRDP that the OHE may also be receiving $115 million for community-based health equity and racial justice efforts. It has been noted that much of this funding will be for clinics, community-based organizations and tribes that can apply for grants either separately or in collaboration. REMHDCO urges the OHE to convene public stakeholder meetings to get input on the requirements for these awards before the RFPs are designed.

Chair de Guia welcomed Ms. von Koch-Liebert and Mr. Rosa to participate in future meetings to continue the conversation. She asked them to share their presentation slides with AC Members and the public.

12:10 p.m. 2021 Third Quarter AC Meeting Preparation Discussion | Public Comment | Adjourn

Chair de Guia asked for feedback on the next AC meeting agenda. She stated Deputy Director Radhakrishna requested to come back to spend more time delving deeper into his vision for the OHE generally and potentially how the AC can work with him, and to hear from AC Members about their vision for the OHE. She stated another option is to continue the discussion around the housing conversation or to discuss other issues.

Ms. Kayali stated California is one of the top three states to receive refugees. She asked about working with agencies to prioritize housing vouchers for refugees so they do not end up on the streets.

Chair de Guia agreed and asked staff to forward Ms. Kayali's request to Ms. von Koch-Liebert and Mr. Rosa. She suggested lifting this issue up within the Department.

Mr. Ramirez suggested creating a set of values or strategy recommendations that the Department can utilize in determining equity principles and frameworks. Stakeholders are able to put issues in a context and timeframe by looking at the communities.

Ms. Abwoon agreed. She volunteered to assist in writing a housing policy paper on community needs and how they have been neglected for too long.

Chair de Guia stated the next AC meeting is scheduled for September 2nd and the next Quarterly Meeting Planning Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for July 29th. She stated the next meeting will continue to focus on housing and Deputy Director Radhakrishna's vision for the OHE. She thanked everyone for participating and ended the proceeding at 12:31 p.m.