

**State Health Commissioner’s Advisory Council on Health Disparity and Health Equity
(ACHDHE)**

April 9, 2024, Meeting Minutes

**James Madison Building
109 Governor Street, Richmond, VA 23219**

Main Conference Room (In-person and Televised Meeting) – 11:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

In person attendance: **Sandra Serna, MPH; David C. Rose, MD, MBA, FAAP; Maceo E. Freeman, D.MIN; Patti Kiger, M. Ed; Carolyn C. Turner, MS; JohnJason Cecil, BA; Linnaya Graf, PhD, MCHES, CPH; Ryan M. Crowder, BS; Kimberly Dyke-Harsley; Karen O’Brien, BS.**

Virtual Attendees: **Kate S. K. Bradshaw, Ph.D., FACHE, CPHQ; Antonio Villa, MD, MPH; George Worthington, MS; Melody Armstrong, MPA, BSN; Linda Lee Redmond, PhD; Olugbenga O. Obasanjo, MBBS, Ph.D., MPH, MBA; Amy Christine Hodge, M. Div.; Barbara Board, PhD.**

Did Not Attend:

Nia Harrison, MPP; Gordon Walker, MS; Eleanor Woodson, BSN, RN; El Hadji Djibril Niang.

VDH Staff: **Breanne Forbes-Hubbard, MPH, Augustine Doe, MS, MPA; Janet Harris, AA**

WELCOME

Dr. Rose, ACHDHE Chair, welcomed the attendees and called for introductions after calling the meeting to order.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Dr. Rose provided an overview of the meeting and requested for amendments or changes to the agenda. The agenda was adopted as presented.

Meeting Agenda: [Agenda:](#)

Link: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/76/2024/03/1.-ACHDHE-April-2024-Meeting-Agenda.pdf>

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The January 9, 2024, meeting minutes were approved as presented. [Minutes](#)

Link: https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/76/2024/04/January-2024-Minutes-ACHDHE_svsEdits-1.pdf

ACHDHE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSIONER

Dr. Bradshaw read the ACHDHE recommendations from the January 9, 2024, meeting presentations. The recommendation document was shared with the State Health Commissioner, Dr. Karen Shelton in advance of the meeting. [Recommendations](#)

Link: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/76/2024/04/ACHDHE-April-9-2024-Recommendations.pdf>

STATE HEALTH COMMISSIONER UPDATES:

Dr. Rose conveyed warm regards from Dr. Karen Shelton, the State Health Commissioner, who was unable to attend the meeting. He also imparted key insights garnered from a recent Virginia Department of Health (VDH) leadership meeting. Furthermore, he indicated that the recommendations for future actions would be formally presented during the meeting of the State Health Commissioner's cabinet members.

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January 2024 Presentations:

PRESENTATIONS:

- Presentation: [“Virginia’s Crisis System Overview”](#) by Commissioner J. Curt Gleeson, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
Link: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/76/2024/04/Commissioner-Gleeson-ACHDHE-04-09-24.pdf>

- Presentation: [“RBHA/Region IV Services and Activities”](#) by Amy Erb, Senior Director of Region 4 Programs, Richmond Behavioral Health Authority
Link: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/76/2024/04/Region-4-Crisis-Continuum-Presentation-04092024.pdf>

New Business:

Dr. David Rose, ACHDHE Chair, provided insights about the upcoming ACHDHE leadership elections 2024 for a two-year term, Chair and Vice Chair. He encouraged members to seek leadership within the ACHDHE. Dr. Rose briefly introduced the two new ACHDHE that were in attendance and asked them to share about themselves. The new members shared brief information about themselves.

UPDATES:

Office of Health Equity (OHE) Updates

Ms. Sandra Serna, Director Office of Health Equity, shared the following updates:

- During the 2024 session of the Virginia General Assembly, the Virginia Department of Health and the Office of Health Equity (VDH) diligently tracked several bills pertinent to health equity. Among these, four bills were assigned to the Office of Health Equity. The Henrietta Lacks Commission bill was the only one to receive the Governor's signature to sunset the commission on July 1, 2024. Nevertheless, efforts to advance the commission's objectives will persist in the local communities.
- Another noteworthy bill, HB 37, aimed at establishing a repayment program for behavioral health clinicians not covered by the existing behavioral health payment program, unfortunately stalled in committee. However, ongoing efforts involve collaboration with appropriations committees from both the Senate and the Virginia House of Delegates to incorporate a third tier into the conference budget. This tier would enable the creation of a program tailored for qualified mental health professionals, a recognized designation in Virginia.
- Lastly, the Office of Health Equity closely monitored two companion bills related to the Prescription Affordability Drug Board, both of which were vetoed by the Governor. Given the recurring introduction of such legislation in recent General Assemblies, ongoing vigilance is warranted. During discussions on these bills, a rural representative highlighted the financial strain faced by individuals in affording prescription drugs while also covering essential expenses. This testimony underscored the pressing need for legislative action. Ms. Serna emphasized the adoption of similar bills in other states including Maryland, signaling the need to address prescription affordability in Virginia.

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ACHDHE Members’ Updates:

- Dr. Lannaya Graf provided a brief overview of the Liberty University public health conference, recognized Mr. Augustine Doe's presence at the conference, and welcomed ACHDHE participation in the forthcoming 2025 conference in Lynchburg, Virginia.

- **PUBLIC COMMENT:**
No public comments.

ADJOURNMENT:

The ACHDHE meeting was adjourned at 1:54 PM.

Next ACHDHE meeting: July 9, 2024.

Time: 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Host Site: James Madison Building, 109 Governor Street, 23219.

Kindly send your questions to augustine.doe@vdh.virginia.gov.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Augustine **Doe**, Division of Multicultural Health and Community Engagement (DMHCE)

Minutes Reviewed By:

David C. **Rose**, MD, FAAP, ACHDHE Chair

Kate **Bradshaw**, Ph.D., FACHE, CPHQ, ACHDHE Vice Chair