

**New York State Department of Health  
Health Equity Council  
June 7, 2024 - Meeting Minutes**

<b>Attendees</b>	<p><b>Council Members:</b> Helen Arteaga-Landaverde, Rev. Diane Holt, , Raul Vazquez, Ngozi Moses</p> <p><b>Partial Attendance:</b> Tandra LaGrone, Mario R. Ortiz, RN, NP; PhD; FNAP, FAAN, Chair, Sara Boerenko, LCSW, Alberto J.F. Cardelle, PhD, MPH and John R. Pamplin II, PhD, MPH</p> <p><b>Council Members with an excused absence:</b> LaRay Brown, Lenora Reid-Rose, Mill Etienne, Luis (Freddy) Molano</p> <p><b>Council Members without excused absence:</b></p> <p><b>New York State Department of Health Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities Prevention Staff:</b> Wilma Alvarado-Little, Julia Vinagolu-Baur, Sheila Maddox</p> <p><b>New York State Department of Health Staff:</b> Jamie Spina (Division of Legal Affairs), Tina Kim (Acting Deputy Commissioner Office of Health Equity and Human Rights)</p>
<b>Topics</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
<p><b>Helen Arteaga-Landaverde Presiding Chair</b></p> <p><b>Call to Order &amp; Introductions</b></p>	<p><b>The meeting was convened at 10:10 A.M.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Helen Arteaga-Landaverde introduced herself and welcomed the fellow council members for this year’s second in-person meeting. Ms. Arteaga-Landaverde welcomed Associate Commissioner, Ms. Alvarado-Little from the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities Prevention, and the new council members Mario R. Ortiz, RN, NP; PhD; FNAP, FAAN, Chair, Sara Boerenko, LCSW, Alberto J.F. Cardelle, PhD, MPH and John R. Pamplin II, PhD, MPH. Dr. Arteaga-Landaverde welcomed Tina Kim, Acting Deputy Commissioner, Office of Health Equity and Human Rights. Dr. Arteaga-Landaverde thanked the public for their participation and reminded them to provide any suggestions, remarks, or information that they wish to share during the public comment period of the agenda.</li> </ul>
<b>Council Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Arteaga-Landaverde provided updates and an overview of the last meeting and year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sickle Cell - PHL §243 was amended by Chapter 523 of the laws of 2022 to include Sickle cell disease detection and education. Therefore, the Health Equity Council shall consider and advise the Commissioner regarding sickle cell disease. Finalized language for the bylaws to include a definition of extraordinary circumstances for Council meeting attendance.</li> <li>○ Confirmed Council meeting dates and locations for 2024.</li> <li>○ Update on the new amendments to the public health law, which goes into effect May 3<sup>rd</sup> for syphilis testing.</li> <li>○ Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion conducted a training in the month of February with the Department of Health overseeing several advisory board and council. Over 200 individuals had been trained.</li> <li>○ There has been a major expansion of combating gun violence in 2024, addressed in Governor Hochul’s State Address, that spoke about things that could be done on the city, state, and local level to combat gun violence.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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- Office of Health Equity and Human Rights received numbers from the health equity impact assessments as per the law which went into effect June 22, 2023
- Update on SMARTIE Goals (Strategic, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic, Inclusive, and Equitable) –SMARTIE will be the way in which goals are managed in order to ensure equity across state initiatives.
- For this upcoming year, the Council plans to focus on women’s health, AI and machine learning, and Sickle Cell.

**• Voting Items**

- Motion requested to accept the March 1<sup>st</sup> meeting minutes.
  - Rev. Diann Holt made the first motion to approve the minutes and Dr. Raul Vazquez made the second motion to approved.
  - Approve – Helen Arteaga-Landaverde, Rev. Diann Holt, Ngozi Moses, Raul Vazquez
  - Oppose – None
  - Abstain – None
- Motion requested to vote on areas of focus be allocated to this committee include women's health, artificial intelligence and machine learning and sickle cell to be the council three major focuses for the upcoming meetings.
  - Ngozi Moses made the first motion to approve, and Rev. Diann Holt made the second motion to approve.
  - Approve – Helen Arteaga-Landaverde, Rev. Diann Holt, Ngozi Moses Raul Vazquez, Tandra LaGrone
  - Oppose – None
  - Abstain – None
- Motion requested to remove language from Article 5 Paragraph 5 of the bylaws that approved extraordinary circumstances applying to the Open Meeting law.
  - In April of 2022, Governor Hochul signed a bill amending Open Meeting Law making permanent the expanded use of video conferencing by public bodies to conduct open meetings under extraordinary circumstances, regardless of a state of emergency declaration. During the March 2024 meeting, the Council approved language in the bylaws that defined extraordinary circumstances in order to support Council members’ participation. *These extraordinary circumstances include, but are not limited to, disability illness, with documentation sent to the chair and commissioner, Caregiver responsibilities, Maternal materiality or elder care, inclement weather, within reason, natural disaster, state city emergency and transportation delays or crisis.*  
In the interim, the Council is no longer subject to Open Meeting Law and therefore the language is no longer needed. Legal will look into the bylaws to see if the language included about open meeting law should be removed from the bill amending open meeting laws. Rev. Diann Holt questioned if the language should be taken out just in case a new Governor takes office and open meeting laws was reinstated. Legal told the Council, bylaws cannot be in objection of laws, but it is highly unlikely for open meeting laws to be reinstated. Attendance should only be challenged if someone questioned whether the Health Equity

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Council board was seen as a governmental function and not only advisory. Legal was comfortable with the council voting to take the language out of the bylaws.

- Ngozi Moses made the first motion to approve, and Tandra LaGrone made the second motion to approve.
- Approve – Helen Arteaga-Landaverde, Rev. Diann Holt, Ngozi Moses Raul Vazquez, Tandra LaGrone
- Oppose – None
- Abstain – None

Helen recommended the Council meet at least once a year to keep connected and not always meet virtually. This item was tabled for the September 2024 meeting to accommodate participation from all Council members and the incoming Chair.

- Wilma introduced new and reappointed council members. New members include Sara Borenko, and Dr. John Pamplin, Dr. Alberto Cardelle and Chair, Dr. Mario Ortiz. Ms. Borenko and Dr. Pamplin gave an overview of their affiliation and regional location.
- Helen welcomed Tina Kim, Acting Deputy Commissioner reported on behalf of Johanne Morne, Executive Deputy Commissioner
  - Tina Kim provided updates from the Office of the Commissioner
    - AIDS Institute - Hepatitis C Elimination Efforts came effective on May 3, 2024, New York State requires all adults and all persons under the age of 18 with an identified risk, receiving services in a primary care, hospital inpatient or outpatient setting, or emergency department, to be offered a hepatitis C screening test. New York State requires all providers attending to a pregnant person to order a hepatitis C screening test during each pregnancy. To promote these new hepatitis C screening requirements, the New York State Department of Health has launched a statewide campaign, [Test4Hep C](#), created new consumer and provider materials, and plans to host webinars across the state and with provider membership organizations. A frequently asked questions document is also being developed.
    - On May 15, 2024, the AIDS Institute hosted the second New York State Hepatitis C Elimination Annual Progress Report Meeting for over 380 virtual and in-person attendees. Dr. Rachael Fleurence, Senior Advisor to the White House on the National Plan for Hepatitis C Elimination, gave the keynote address. The meeting provided New York City and State updates on the progress towards hepatitis C elimination and reviewed innovative and promising hepatitis C practices from across New York State.
    - Syphilis Test for all Pregnant Persons - Effective May 3, 2024, New York State requires a syphilis test on all pregnant persons during the third trimester of pregnancy under Public Health Law §2308, as amended by sections 4 and 5 of Part AA of Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2023. Before, syphilis testing was only required at the time of the first examination and again at delivery under 10 NYCRR section 69-2.2. To meet this additional syphilis screening requirement, pregnant persons should

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- be tested for syphilis at 28 weeks of pregnancy, or as soon thereafter as reasonably possible, but no later than at 32 weeks of pregnancy. For pregnant persons who screen negative at their first exam, this third trimester screen will ensure adequate time for persons who seroconvert during their pregnancy to be appropriately treated prior to delivery. Interim Guidance was issued in July of 2023.
- New Lecture and Learn Discussion Series for New York State Department of Health Employees - In partnership with the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities Prevention, the AIDS Institute's Office of Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer Services launched a new lecture and learn discussion series for New York State Department of Health employees. This multi-part series began in January 2024 and continues to present several topics impacting Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ+) health outcomes in New York State and provide opportunities for group discussion. A goal of this series is to increase opportunities for New York State Department of Health staff to learn about and discuss health and health equity issues related to the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer community to inform our work and programs.
  - June is Pride Month - June is Pride Month. The New York State Department of Health is taking part in a number of Pride Month activities throughout the state, including marching in the Albany Capital Pride Parade on June 9, 2024.
  - The AIDS Institute's Office of Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender, and Queer Services, in collaboration with the Office of Sexual Health and Epidemiology and the Bureau of HIV and Sexually Transmitted Disease Field Services, will be conducting outreach and providing information at several Pride events in June. Staff will have a presence at Buffalo Pride, Rochester Pride, Black, Indigenous and People of Color Pride in Albany, and Capital Pride in Albany.
  - June is Gun Violence Awareness Month - The Office of Gun Violence Prevention within the New York State Department of Health is recognizing the occasion through various speaking events and awareness campaigns that will take place across the state. The office was founded when Governor Hochul classified gun violence as a public health crisis. The office was created to take a public health approach to end gun violence.
  - Wilma gave an update on the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities Prevention.
  - The American Indian Health Program continues to support efforts to disseminate funds to the Nations.
  - Language Access Program is working with the Office of Language Access and providing equipment to allow simultaneous interpreting services and tablets to programs to help support language access needs across NYS.
  - In June 2023, NYS DOH acquired funds from the CDC to help address Covid to help combat covid in underprivileged communities. OMHHDP are supporting a project with the AIDS institute with the Covid funds to help create and strengthen bonds within the community, by developing a lecture series.
  - In 2022, Governor Hochul declared racism a public health crisis which established a working group to focus on racial equity among NYS. This racial equity working group involves 7 pillars. We are currently looking to build pillars in the next areas to address by identifying subcommittee members. For additional information, contact [OMHHDP@health.ny.gov](mailto:OMHHDP@health.ny.gov) . Please include in the subject line "Racism as a public health crisis."

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Asian American Pacific Islanders Data Disaggregation legislation continues to move forward to ensure our communities are represented accurately as possible when it comes to race and ethnicity.</li> <li>○ Through the Health Disparities CDC grant, the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities Prevention is partnering with the Office of Rural health to establish the Rural Health Working Group and works to bridge relationships throughout rural communities in NYS</li> <li>○ The Race and Ethnicity Data Toolkit staff continues to develop this resource to more accurately collect data and provide resources for race and ethnicity data in communities</li> </ul> <p>Helen opened the floor for questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tandra LaGrone asked whether the toolkit information and meeting minutes will be open to the public and to NYS employees.</li> </ul>
<b>Presentation</b>	<p>A presentation “Sickle Cell” was provided in response to PHL §243 amendment of Chapter 523 of the laws of 2022 to include Sickle cell disease detection and education. Presenters included: Suzanne Swan, Director, Bureau of Child Health, Carolyn Perry, Unit Manager, Community-Based Health Unit, Kristina Usack, Program Manager, Community-Based Health Unit, Avani Pathak, Program Manager, Community-Based Health Unit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The floor was open for questions for the Health Equity Council regarding the presentation findings.</li> <li>○ Follow up and recommendation were discussed about how we can better collect race and ethnicity data.</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting Recap, Feedback, Action Items and Next Steps</b>	<p>Recap, next steps, and action items:</p> <p>This will be Dr Helen Arteaga-Landaverde last meeting as Chair and Dr. Mario Ortiz will assume the Chair ship for the September meeting. We thank her for her dedication and guidance. She took over July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020, dealing with Covid health literacy in communities. She provided different resources to communities during the pandemic and was the main author of White paper on the listening tour conducted by the prior administration of the Council and provided a qualitative view from the help of former Council member Dr. Daniel Carrion. This has been submitted to NYS Dept of Health Office of and has submitted to the state and approved. Data was then shown to the Council who then provided it to organizations within NYS. The Council is to advise and provide a memo to the state health commissioner on what he should be keeping an eye on. The memo was drafted up summarizing everything that has been getting done for the past 2 years.</p> <p>The floor was opened to Comments/Questions for the Council regarding Helen’s last meeting as chair.</p> <p>New chair, Dr. Mario Ortiz, Dean at the Decker College of Nursing and Health Sciences at Binghamton University joined the meeting and introduced himself to the Council and to the public.</p>

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**Public Comment  
and Adjournment**

*Ms. Arteaga-Landaverde opened the floor to public and the following inquiries were sent via email from the webcast chat.*

*Question/Comment: Stephanie Gagnon, stephanie.gagnon@health.ny.gov In regard to carrier screening for hemoglobinopathies, there are currently recommendations set out by the American College of OB/GYNS (ACOG) stating that all women should be offered screening for these diseases when pregnant or considering pregnancy.*

*Question/Comment: LaToya Jones, Email: ljones@unitedway-cny.org - For Wilma Alvarado-Little, Office of Minority Health: I am interested in the sub-committee on racism as a public health crisis. Can you please repeat the email after break and or forward my contact information.*

**The meeting adjourned at 12:30 PM.**

**Next Meeting Date**

**September 13, 2024,**

**Time**

**10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

**Location**

**Albany, NY**