

**New York State Department of Health
Health Equity Council
December 6, 2024 - Meeting Minutes**

<p>Attendees</p>	<p>Council Members: In person: Mario R. Ortiz, Helen Arteaga-Landaverde, LaRay Brown, John R. Pamplin II, Luis (Freddy) Molano Virtually: Alberto J.F. Cardelle, Sara Boerenko, Ngozi Moses, Mill Etienne, Guillermo Chacón, Raul Vazquez, Tandra LaGrone Partial Attendance: Council Members with an excused absence: N/A Council Members without excused absence: Diane Holt, Lenora Reid-Rose New York State Department of Health Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities Prevention Staff: Wilma Alvarado-Little, Olivia Ash, Alice Spina New York State Department of Health Staff: Suzanne Swan, Carolyn Perry, Kristina Usack, Stephanie Gagnon, Virginia Sack, Kacey Griffin</p>
<p>Topics</p>	<p>Call to Order & Introductions</p> <p><i>Mario Ortiz: Chair</i></p>
<p>Council Business</p>	<p>The meeting was convened at 10:06 A.M.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair, Mario Ortiz, RN, NP; PhD; FNAP, FAAN, introduced himself and welcomed fellow council members for this year’s final in-person meeting. Dr. Ortiz calls meeting to order. Introductions were made, Freddy Molano, John Pamplin, Helen Arteaga-Landaverde, PhD; MPH, Alberto J.F. Cardelle, PhD; MPH, Ngozi Moses MSc. <p>Dr. Ortiz, Chair Provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the agenda • PHL §243 Sickle Cell: 50th Anniversary presentation and discussion • Dr. Ortiz facilitated Council voting items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 13, 2024, Health Equity Council meeting minutes: John Pamplin stated motion for approval. Ms. Moses seconded that motion. One abstention – Freddy Molano – Council Approved <p>Updates:</p> <p>Kacey Griffin provided updates for Office of Health Equity and Human Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Griffin gave an overview of updates from the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Office of Gun Violence Prevention, and new legislation being enacted to improve gun violence prevention in New York State. ○ AIDS Institute, including updates on high profile sexually transmitted infection rates, new funding, and recent publications in the field of drug user health. <p>Wilma Alvarado-Little MA MSW, Associate Commissioner and office director provided updates for the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities Prevention including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office funded initiatives including Cancer Action Incorporated in Rochester, Vernon Neighborhood Health Center, Health Initiative for Men (HIM) Mt. Vernon Neighborhood Health Center/Westchester Community and Nations in the Northeast. • OMH-HDP in partnership with SUNY Albany – data summit – First in HHS OMH Region II to hold a data summit of this type.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnered with AIDS institute to conduct a four-part virtual seminars series focused on the community’s health disparities services and policies. Language Access and Health Literacy – Article co-authored by Wilma Alvarado-Little and published in American Pediatrics which focused on language matters and language inclusivity in pediatric health care. October Health Literacy Month
<p>Updates and Presentation: Sickle Cell - S1839A / A2609 <i>Suzanne Swan, Director, Bureau of Child Health</i></p> <p><i>Alice Spina, Public Health Fellow III, Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities Prevention</i></p>	<p>Sickle Cell - S1839A / A2609 Updates and presentation:</p> <p>Presentation: Ms. Alice Spina presented a summary of federal legislation that addresses sickle cell disease. This legislation ranged from historic, recent, and proposed laws that are specific to sickle cell disease or affect the sickle cell community. She also revisited preliminary recommendations from the Council that were discussed at the September meeting, including a list of questions based on the Council’s specific legislative charge and showed the group a sample timeline based on activities discussed at the September meeting, and can update as Council members decide how they would like to proceed with their recommendations.</p> <p>Recommendations from September 13:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Newborn screening invite to discuss how to implement a statewide approach. Make gene therapy available in low-income neighborhoods. Establish Medicaid benefits to make treatment more affordable. Research current standards of care transition between pediatric to adult care. Plan of action for community listening sessions to inform recommendations. <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council proceeded to discuss the findings. Dr. Pamplin suggested an emphasis on testing and asked about the newborn screening process. All babies in NY are tested at birth and have results within a week. There is a challenge to disseminating education surrounding Sickle Cell and educating families affected. Dr. Arteaga-Landaverde inquired about how to make this data accessible? Dr. Ortiz recommended collaboration with other committees and community listening sessions. Dr. Pamplin inquired about equal access to Sickle Cell Care and how to help minority communities. It was shared that after a newborn test positive they are referred to a specialist and have follow up 13 weeks after initial screening. <p>Suzanne Swan, Director, Bureau of Child Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Swan provided an update on stakeholder meetings and listening sessions from September. Recommendations from the listening sessions include create fact sheets; conducting listening sessions and asking contractors to engage youth with lived experience. She recommended screening pregnant people, and their partners, at the beginning of pregnancy; increase parents’ awareness of their sickle cell status; using the 50th Anniversary of Sickle Cell (ADD) as an opportunity to celebrate patients and bring awareness to Sickle Cell disease.

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	<p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council members suggested collaborating other organizations while allocating funding. The council wants clarity on community needs and would like to receive feedback communities directly affected. It was recommended to build off previous Sickle Cell legislation, run an education campaign and reach out to county public health personnel. It was decided that the recommendations should come from individuals with lived experience and to revisit the original legislation, specifically, Federal Legislation from 2014 Senator Tim Scott and Assemblymember Michael Burgess from TX in 2014. 				
<p>Department of Health Initiatives:</p> <p><i>Health Equity Plan – Kacey Griffin, Senior Health Program Coordinator, NYS DOH</i></p> <p><i>Prevention Agenda: Zahra Allali, NYS Prevention Agenda Coordinator, NYS DOH</i></p> <p><i>Prevention Agenda: Elizabeth Whalen, Medical Director NYS DOH</i></p>	<p>Health Equity Plan – Kacey Griffin, Office of Health Equity and Human Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided an overview of the Health Equity Plan that was shared with the Department of Health in Summer of 2024. • The presentation defined the Health Equity Plan. It described key themes, values for staff to consider and, how to best integrate Health Equity into everyday work and practices. For more details on the Plan, please see the document published online at the Department of Health’s webpage. <p>Presentation: Prevention Agenda – Zahra Allali and Dr. Elizabeth Whale, NYS Prevention Agenda Coordinator, NYS DOH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided overview of the Prevention Agenda. The goal of the prevention agenda is to improve health status of New Yorkers and reduce health disparities through and increased focus on prevention. It is designed to be implemented by a wide variety of people, organizations, and agencies. The is a 6-year plan focused on prevention of chronic diseases, promote a Healthy and Safe Environment, promote healthy women, infants, and children, promote well-being, and prevent mental and substance use disorders and prevent communicable diseases. • The data shows there are persistent health disparities across the state specifically maternal child health. Next steps are to create a Social Determinants of Health Interagency workgroup to promote a culture of health and equity across policy areas, integrate health and equity into organizational practices and facilitate collaboration to identify common goals and opportunities to enhance performance. 				
<p>Meeting Recap, Feedback, Action Items and Next Steps</p>	<p>Dr. Ortiz thanked the Council for a great discussion. Next steps include creating a timeline for the Council to investigate and provide recommendations to the Department of Health and the Commissioner of Health regarding Sickle Cell. The goal is to provide recommendations by the end of 2025.</p> <p>The Council members agreed and approved the 2025 meeting dates:</p> <p>Dates for 2025:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">1st mtg: March 7th (NYC) – 10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. – New York City</td> <td style="width: 50%;">3rd mtg: (virtual) September 12th</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2nd mtg: June 13th (Albany)</td> <td>4th mtg: December 5th (NYC)</td> </tr> </table>	1 st mtg: March 7 th (NYC) – 10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. – New York City	3 rd mtg: (virtual) September 12 th	2 nd mtg: June 13 th (Albany)	4 th mtg: December 5 th (NYC)
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**Public Comment and
Adjournment**

Wilma Alvarado-Little opened the floor to public. The following questions were received via email.

Question/Comment: In recent years, Harlem Hospital’s OB/Gyn department is going thru a severe staffing crisis. Currently, they are lacking presence in EVERY subspecialty, and their generalist staff has been reduced significantly. Lack of proper OB/Gyn staffing to prevent MATERNAL MORTALITY in a historically Black population is hypocrisy of the highest order.

Helen Arteaga-Landaverde: They can call upon any hospitals within the Elmers system to address shortfalls. Part of nursing and staffing shortages would have to be reported to NYS and currently there are none reported. There is ratio per unit that needs to be met and we meet that through agency and per diem staff.

Question/Comment: Hello, I am a medical student and am expressing concern about H+H's plan to cut primary care appts in half for new patients, as well as increase doctors' patient panels. The halving of time patients has with primary care doctors disproportionately impacts patients with limited-English proficiency and perpetuates health disparities for patients. Along with other unionized doctors and community members, NYC medical students are against this proposed change and call on H+H leadership to reconsider.

Helen Arteaga-Landaverde: That has been addressed, it does not change anything they are doing if anything it provides additional individual access. The template is being changed and is a best practice. Regular time for patients was 40 minutes and it is now changed to 20 minutes.

Question/Comment: NYC H+H is the largest municipal health system in the US and claims that “social and racial equity” underpins all decision-making as an over-arching value by the Mayorally-appointed board. Who oversees employment practices by the “Affiliates” such as PAGNY, Mount Sinai Services and NYU, that seem to act against an inclusive and equitable medical workforce at H+H?

Question/Comment: Regarding the prevention agenda, do local partners and organizations also include non-profits? Yes, according to the presenters.

Comment: Dr. Beverley – Discussion of Sickle Cell and bridging the gaps in care. Created a sickle cell support group. Need to pay attention to the voices of those that suffer from the disease. Offer family counseling and sustainable changes. 1 in 365 black patients have Sickle Cell. There is a large inequity of treatment. Develop a transition of care from adolescents into adulthood. Create a complaint form about lack of care or disparities in care with the goal to change the culture of the institution. Joint Commission certificates – only 1 in Cleveland Ohio for Sickle Cell. Dr. Beverly will send information to Olivia to further discuss.

The meeting adjourned at 1:21 PM. (Motion from John Pamplin and Seconded from Helen Arteaga-Landaverde)