

**Disparities Elimination Committee Meeting**  
**Thursday, March 21, 2024**  
**9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.**  
**Microsoft Teams Meeting**

<b>Committee Members Present:</b>	
Alejandro Aguilera	Jay Orne (co-chair)
Patrick Ingram	Sarah Schiele (co-chair)
Mark Jenkins	James Velek
Nikki LeClaire	
<b>Committee Members Absent:</b>	
Calvin Hillary Hylton	Oceane Lune
<b>Guests:</b>	
Emily Reimer, DHS	Cody Raasch, Hennepin County
<b>Hennepin County (Part A) Representative:</b>	
Eriika Etshokin	<b>DHS (Part B) Representative:</b>
	Thomas Blissett
	Amy Miller
<b>MDH (Prevention) Representative:</b>	
McKinzie Woelfel	<b>MDH (Surveillance) Representative:</b>
	Hannah Giles (MDH – Epi)
<b>MCHACP Staff:</b>	
Audra Gaikowski, Council Coordinator	Jeremy Stadelman, Admin Specialist (minutes)

Quorum Present? Yes

**I. Welcome and introductions**

- Jay Orne called the meeting to order at 9:32am.

**II. Review, approval of minutes from February 15 meeting and proposed agenda**

- The meeting minutes from the February 15 meeting were reviewed and approved with noted changes below:
  - Alejandro made several grammatical and verbiage changes that did not affect the context of conversations.
- The agenda for today's meeting was reviewed and approved as written.

**III. Committee conversation**

*Sarah Schiele & Jay Orne. DEC Co-Chairs*

- Jay noted that committee meetings are meant to be more informal than council meetings and Robert's Rules of Order do not need to be strictly followed. This allows for more informal conversations.

**IV. 2025 Needs Assessment gender identity questions**

*Emily Reimer, DHS & Cody Raasch, Hennepin County*

- Emily reviewed the **NA2025 Gender Questions Proposal**.
- In the chat, Eriika provided some context for new members: Every 5 years, the council administers a survey to people living with HIV in Minnesota and two counties in Wisconsin. The results from the Needs Assessment help the council make resource allocation and service priorities in future years.

We did it in 2020 and are now preparing for the next Needs Assessment survey in 2025. Your input today will help determine how gender identity questions are posed in that survey.

- The 2020 needs assessment survey found that transgender was a community with many disparities.
- Emily reviewed the proposed gender questions for the NA2025.
  - In reference to the Two-spirited gender identity, Patrick asked what the minimum number of responses are needed to disaggregate the data. Emily responded that 10 are needed and less than that would require that the data be suppressed. Hannah added that anything less than 12 responses should not be used for comparative analysis because it is not statistically significant.
  - Emily proposed that the question asking an individual's sex at birth be removed and members asked why this question would be removed.
    - Emily replied that removing this question would allow individuals to self-identify as being trans rather than it being assumed based on how a respondent answers the sex at birth and gender identity questions.
    - Jay noted some individuals may not consider themselves as a part of the trans community but may have another gender identity that does fall under the trans umbrella for analysis/research purposes. Not asking "sex at birth" may miss certain identities.
      - Cody suggested that the survey could ask "do you consider yourself trans" rather than "do you consider yourself a part of the trans community" to help capture individuals who don't necessarily consider themselves a part of the trans community.
    - Cody noted that they are looking for a way to ask less intrusive questions.
    - Patrick suggested that these types of changes should be made with community preferences in mind. It would be good to reach out to the trans community to get feedback.
    - Jay suggested keeping the added questions about trans identification along with the sex assigned at birth question. This two-step process is recommended by NIH, academia, etc.
    - Nikki agreed that asking sex assigned at birth is important, but individuals should have the ability to respond with "prefer not to answer."
    - Nikki noted that some individuals consider Two-spirited to be a gender and sexual identity.
      - Patrick recommended reaching out to relevant groups to get clarity on this.
    - There was consensus to add non-binary as an option for gender identity.
    - Members suggested reaching out to trans groups (like Tea Time) for further feedback.
    - Cody reviewed the changes made by the committee:
      - Asking "Do you consider yourself trans?"
      - Adding non-binary as an option for gender identity
      - Keep assigned sex at birth question
      - Add Two-spirit as a gender identity option
    - Cody and Emily agreed to present these changes to Tea Time or another similar trans group to gather feedback.
- Emily reviewed the proposed sexual identity questions for the NA2025.
  - The committee made no changes to the proposal.
- Questions/comments:

- Jay wondered if it would be possible to break up the analysis for gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, and queer individuals rather than grouping them together for data analysis. Cody and Emily replied that they will look to see what is possible, but some groups may be combined because there are not enough responses to meet data reporting guidelines.
  - Alejandro noted that these groups have different needs and it is important to understand those specific needs.

## V. Discuss & finalize draft recommendation to PAC

- Audra displayed the ***Recommendation from the Disparities Elimination Committee to the Planning and Allocations Committee (PAC)***.
- Questions/comments:
  - Alejandro suggested that the recommendation to PAC should include a proposed increase in allocations to psychosocial support services (PSS).
    - Audra suggested that a second recommendation could be developed that includes an increase to PSS allocations.
    - The April PAC meeting will include a discussion on FY25 allocations, and the separate recommendation can be reviewed at that time.
    - Eriika added that PAC would have to take money away from a service standard and they are not ready for this.
  - Alejandro suggested that the recommendation include data on substance use disorder (SUD) outpatient and inpatient treatment.
    - Audra suggested that the committee could pass the recommendation with the caveat that she will add this data.
  - Patrick wondered if it would be helpful to include an FTE minimum to demonstrate a commitment of time for programmatic support.
    - The goal of the recommendation is to update service standard, and it's not an intervention within the service standard.
- **MOTION:** Alejandro Aguilera moved that the recommendation be updated to include data on SUD data to be added by Audra Gaikowski before going to PAC. Nikki LeClaire seconded.
- **DEBATE:** none.
- **VOTE:** With 6 ayes and 0 noes, the motion carries.
  
- **MOTION:** Alejandro Aguilera moved that the recommendation be approved and moved to PAC for consideration. Sarah Schiele seconded.
- Those with a conflict of interest temporarily left the meeting.
- **DEBATE:** none.
- **VOTE:** With 3 ayes and 0 noes, the motion carries.
- Those with a conflict of interest returned to the meeting.
  
- **MOTION:** Alejandro Aguilera moved that the committee recommend that PAC consider additional allocations for PSS. Nikki LeClaire seconded.
- Those with a conflict of interest temporarily left the meeting.
- **DEBATE:** None.
- **VOTE:** With 3 ayes and 0 noes, the motion carries.
- Those with a conflict of interest returned to the meeting.

## VI. Committee co-chair election

- Sarah Schiele took over facilitation.
- Audra shared the **Committee Co-Chair Position Description**.
- The floor was opened to nominations:
  - Patrick was nominated.
- **MOTION:** Jay Orne moved that Patrick Ingram be elected to serve as Chair. Alejandro Aguilera seconded.
- **DEBATE:** None.
- **VOTE:** With 6 ayes and 0 noes, the motion carries.
- Until a second Co-Chair is named, this item will remain on future DEC agendas.

#### **VII. Review FY2024 Workplan**

- Audra presented and reviewed the **FY24 Workplan**.
- The committee agreed to revisit this at the May meeting.

#### **VIII. New business / Unfinished Business**

- Patrick requested that MDH present on MPox before the summer. Audra agreed to reach out to Jose to request this.

#### **IX. Set agenda for next meeting**

- Review mental health and substance use service standard.
- Discuss youth with HIV data presentation from Hennepin County and MDH.
  - Members requested the following data be included in the presentation:
    - a. Racial disparities
    - b. Geographical disparities within the TGA
    - c. Current services being offered and possible TA for delivering services to youth
- Youth and AIDS Projects presentation.
- Discuss recommendation for PAC regarding allocations for mental health and substance.

#### **X. Announcements**

- None.

#### **XI. Adjourn**

- Sarah Schiele adjourned the meeting at 11:28 a.m.

#### **Meeting Summary**

- The committee reviewed the 2025 Needs Assessment gender identity questions.
- The committee discussed and finalized the draft recommendation to PAC
- The committee approved a motion that the recommendation be updated to include data on SUD data to be added by Audra Gaikowski before going to PAC.
- The committee approved a motion that the recommendation be approved and moved to PAC for consideration.
- The committee approved a motion that the committee recommend that PAC consider additional allocations for PSS. Nikki LeClaire seconded.
- The committee approved a motion that Patrick Ingram be elected to serve as co-chair.

**Documents shared before the meeting:**

- 2024.03.21 DEC Agenda
- 2024.02.15 DEC Minutes
- Draft directive recommendation from PAC to DEC for PSS
- NA2025 Gender Question Proposal
- Disparities Elimination Committee Co-Chair Position Description
- FY24 Workplan

**Documents shared during the meeting:**

- Final approved allocation recommendation to PAC
- Final approved directive recommendation to PAC

**JS/ag**