



Maternal and Child Health Advisory Task Force Meeting Summary Friday, June 9, 2023

Members Present:

Carolyn Allshouse
Vanessa Bembridge
Sameerah Bilal-Roby
Paige Bowen
Tricia Brisbane
Sarah Brown
Najoicia Elmore
Rachel Gilbertson
Stephanie Graves
Stephanie de Sam Lazaro
Marie Malinowski
Meredith O'Brien
Michelle O'Brien
Tamiko Ralston
Sadie Swenson
Megan Waltz
Lindsey Wimmer

Members Absent:

Kara Hamilton-McGraw
Eugene Nichols
Jaime Slaughter-Acey
Jamie Stang

MDH Staff

Nicole Brown
Khatidja Dawood
Judy Edwards
Karen Fogg
Jennifer Heath
Jennie Lippert
Kathy Moore
Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro
Lisa Thimjon
Lynn Thompson
Anne Walaszek
Kathy Wick
Noya Woodrich

Welcome, Introductions and Chair Remarks

Paige Anderson Bowen, Task Force Chair, welcomed everyone and introductions were made. It was moved and seconded to approve the June meeting agenda. She also reminded members that the in-person Betty Hubbard MCH Leadership Award ceremony will be held during this year October meeting rather than December's.. She also noted that volunteers are needed to serve on the BH Award committee and Work Plan committee.

MDH Legislative Updates

Lisa Thimjon, MDH Legislative Director, updated the task force on the high-level topics of the legislative session. She noted that the Healthy Beginnings/Healthy Families proposal was approved. Also, of note is increased funding for the model jail practices grant and the sexual reproductive health grants (formerly Family Planning Special Projects). Help Me Connect and Family Home Visiting funding were also expanded. Lisa also reported other legislation passed was creation of a new task force on pregnancy health and substance abuse, MDH will house all of the fetal alcohol syndrome grants, the new

Department of Children, Youth and Families will be formed next year, and continuous eligibility for MA for children up to age 6, an increased child tax credit, which will greatly benefit Minnesota's families.

CFH Updates

CFH Division Director Noya Woodrich announced some of the division's new staff: Jennie Lippert is the new Family Home Visiting manager who replaces Dawn Reckinger. Jennie comes to CFH from Kandiyohi County. We have also added a division communications position and Kathy Moore has joined CFH in this role. She will support all of the division's communication work.

CFH is also currently participating with the Health Equity Bureau in interviews for a health strategist position. Each division in MDH will eventually have a health strategist.

She also noted that she applauds all of the staff who worked on this legislative session. We are already working to determine how to use these funds for infant mortality prevention.

MDH's comprehensive drug overdose and morbidity prevention program which is housed in the Health Promotion Chronic Disease division. CFH will now be a part of this program.

The MCH section will be receiving funds for cannabis use for the second year.

The CFH division isn't largely connected to the new Children, Youth and Family agency but one staff who works with Help Me Connect will be transferring to that division.

Paige asked what specific programs will be moving to the new agency and how it will interface with MDH and DHS. Noya noted that a long list of programs/projects from MDE and DHS including child welfare, early childhood including childcare, Help Me Connect (a current MDH resource), and two or three programs that will be coming from the Office of Justice.

Noya also noted she is on the transition work team for the new agency and is part of approximately 10 staff who will be part of this transition group. The agency's leadership positions will be posted over the next few weeks.

Assistant Commissioner Khatidja Dawood announced that her position is interim and they will be hiring a permanent Assistant Commissioner soon.

Title V MCH Block Grant

Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro, MCH Title V Coordinator, expressed she would be presenting a high-level overview of the Title V MCH Block Grant, which would perhaps be a refresher for some members and perhaps new information for others. Some highlights included years 1 – 5 deliverables. We are currently in Year 4 of the Block Grant cycle. The 5-year needs assessment, annual report and an annual application plan are the largest parts of this cycle. She also highlighted the priority areas within MCH population domains and the strategies and activities within the priority areas, all which are part of the state action plan. Elizabeth stated next activities related to the Title V MCH block grant will include the 2025 needs assessment and strategic planning, meaningfully engaging the community, the division's equity work, and quarterly updates from division staff.

I-MOM Perinatal Task Force Subcommittee Updates

Subcommittee co-chair Najocia Elmore reported on the current progress of the subcommittee which stating the group has transitioned to meeting monthly, in process to implement contracts for compensating members (hoping for July 1 start date), conducting assessment of perinatal care gaps, (, ongoing recruitment of community members. Najocia also added that the subcommittee has started creating community agreements and have identified two community co-chairs.

She further reported that future initiatives/actions include presentation of data and a data dashboard during the June meeting, finalizing community agreements, recruiting members from greater Minnesota, and attending the National Maternal Health Innovation Symposium which will be held August 2 and 3 in-person and August 9 and 10 virtually.

Najocia highlighted the current members (10) and recruitment efforts that include connecting with organizations such as Doula4All, DHS, MnDOT, Sabathani Community Center, Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness, Minnesota Ethnic Council and the Quad-County (Carlton, Cook, Lake, St. Louis) Community Health Board.

Member News and Issues

Rachel Gilbertson shared that northeast Minnesota is very grateful for the grants from MDH. She mentioned challenges in northeast Minnesota specific to evidence-based family home visiting, is the braiding of funding to support home visiting where MCH funds are a set rate based on a formula and other grants are written specifically to support evidence-based home visiting She is wondering if other people experience challenges with how to go about performing that work really well and clearly because the MCH funds stay very stable over time and not really increased with the changes and sometimes they have to figure out how to braid funding when it's required to have certain percentages in what may be a bigger amount and the other stays the same. She is interested in seeing how with these new legislative updates and with the additional funding, how we bring all of those together. New CFH Family Home Visiting manager Jennie Lippert will bring these questions to the Family Home Visiting team and follow up with Rachel.

Meredith O'Brien asked if Rachel's question was regarding how the funds work together regarding the activities or about the challenges in trying to make sure things costs are covered or both. Rachel noted it is all of the above. They braid funding using strung foundations grants through MDH, MCH funds, TANF funds, and third-party reimbursements from those evidence-based visits and local levy. They are building a comprehensive budget so they have a better idea of how all of them work together. One specific example would be if they were to provide a family celebration event, ideally all of those funding streams would provide a little bit portion to fund that event and yet when maybe through strong foundations they are able to request a certain amount but MCH and TANF in her counties often run out and they don't have enough funds to support the positions they once did and are left to county levy funds which are not feasibly accessible. Another issue is nurse-wage advocacy where they compete against larger clinics and hospitals which can pay higher wages.

Meredith noted that Hennepin County has encountered similar scenarios and they have connected with their grants manager at MDH for suggestions and ideas.

Adjourn (next meeting – Friday, August 11, 2023)