



2021-22 CSG Healthy States National Task Force

Human Health Subcommittee

Meeting Summary No. 1 - June 21, 2021

The first meeting of the The Council of State Governments (CSG) Healthy States National Task Force - Human Health Subcommittee took place virtually Monday, June 21, 2021. The subcommittee explored issues related to **health care inequities** and **improving health outcomes**.

Human Health

Sean Slone and Elise Gurney (CSG) recapped the work of [2019-2020 CSG Healthy States National Task Force](#) and discussed health policy trends in both the legislative and executive sectors of state government, including telehealth, maternal health, and mental health.

[Presentation Recording](#)

Health Care Inequities

“An Overview of Health & Health Care Disparities Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic & Beyond”

Samantha Artiga (Kaiser Family Foundation) provided the Subcommittee an overview of health and health care disparities across the U.S. and examined the intersection of racism and discrimination, social and economic inequities, and health. Artiga focused on health disparities broken down by race. Discussion afterwards included an anecdote about successful COVID-19 vaccine distribution in tribal communities and the role health care plays in lowering reentry rates for justice-involved individuals. Other findings presented at the meeting included:

- Underserved groups experience higher rates of illness and death that result in unnecessary costs and weakens overall national health. COVID-19 exemplified these disparities: people of color were more likely to get infected, be hospitalized, and die from the virus.
- As the population become more diverse, it is increasingly important to address these disparities by:
 - o Prioritizing equity and directing resources to address underlying inequities in structures and systems across sectors
 - o Increasing the availability of high-quality, disaggregated data and using data to inform actions and policies
 - o Establishing measurable goals for health equity and incentives and accountability for meeting those goals
 - o Building on and supporting existing community resources and strengths

[Presentation Recording](#)

“Health Equity: Federal Momentum & Implications for States”

Rachel Nuzum (The Commonwealth Fund) provided the subcommittee further information on the health disparities across the U.S., focusing on the intersection of health, race and income.

Nuzum detailed how racial and ethnic groups are experiencing the COVID-19 vaccine rollout differently and discussed policies developed both by the Biden administration and the 117th Congress around equity policy, including:

- The creation of a COVID-19 Racial and Ethnic Disparities Task Force
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declaration that systemic racism is a public health issue
- Allocation of American Rescue Plan funding for front-line workers and expanded post-partum coverage

Nuzum said state and federal leaders could take historic steps to address health care inequities by addressing policies around:

- Coverage and affordability
- Payment and delivery changes
- Enhanced racial and ethnic data collection and reporting
- Incorporation of social needs and drivers of health into care delivery
- Exploration of the intersection of social and economic justice and health outcomes

[Presentation Recording](#)

Increasing Health Outcomes

“State Efforts to Address Health Equity and Disparities”

Hemi Tewarson (National Academy for State Health Policy) reviewed recent state efforts to address health equity and existing disparities and improve health outcomes. Tewarson explained the usefulness for states to address equity concerns in vaccination programs through the improved collection and use of data and the removing specific systemic barriers. Tewarson also provided the Subcommittee information on Adverse Childhood Experiences, including the risk of increasing incidents across the population – disproportionately affecting racial and ethnic groups – due to the health and economic impacts of the pandemic and state policy changes.

Tewarson reviewed the opportunities for states to improve health outcomes through the use of American Rescue Plan funding, including opportunities for:

- strengthening behavioral health programs;
- addressing trauma and adverse childhood experiences; and
- enhancing food security and nutrition.

Tewarson also reviewed how states can sustain equity in health policy and public health by:

- developing strategies that can be leveraged beyond COVID-19;

- creating more resilient public health systems;
- institutionalizing racial equity into governance and policy development; and
- centering diversity, equity, and inclusion in state government.

[Presentation Recording](#)

Human Health Subcommittee Focuses

The Human Health Subcommittee discussed ways the task force could focus its efforts to highlight policy data and state policy examples and consider recommendations for health care disparities and increasing health outcomes along the following focus areas:

- **Mental Health** – Subcommittee members expressed a desire for further resources and deeper discussion on the topics of mental health and substance abuse, and how to get individuals with these challenges connected to resources.
- **Disproportionately Affected Population Groups** – The subcommittee is interested in diving deeper into health equity best practices in the areas of maternal health, health care for justice-involved individuals and Native Americans and Tribal Nations.
- **Technology Enablers** – The subcommittee requested a more nuanced assessment of the strengths, challenges and best practices around using “Big Data” and new technologies as means for creating greater health access.
- **Health Care Data** – The subcommittee is interested in how to access data around community health and how to utilize data to create better, more sustainable solutions.

Resources

Speaker Links

Commonwealth Fund

- [Medicaid Managed Care Database](#)
- [State Strategies for Establishing Connections to Health Care for Justice-Involved Populations: The Central Role of Medicaid](#) (Issue Brief)

KFF (Kaiser Family Foundation)

- [COVID-19 Vaccination Among American Indian and Alaska Native People](#) (Issue Brief)

National Academy for State Health Policy

- [How States Collect, Report, and Act on COVID-19 Race and Ethnicity Data](#) (Web Resource)
- [States' Efforts to Address Adverse Childhood Experiences are Critical During COVID-19](#) (Article)
- [Resources for States to Address Health Equity and Disparities](#) (Web Resource)

Policy Examples and Resources Highlighted by Task Force Members and Partners

- [Vaccine Equity Planner](#) by **Ariadne Labs and partners** (Web Resource)
- **Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS): [Healthy Equity](#)** (Web Resource)
The [Washington State Recovery Budget](#) intends to use state and federal funds from the American Rescue Plan to support people hit hardest during the pandemic.
- **Women in Government: [WIG Webinar: Maternal Mental Health Awareness](#)**

Human Health Subcommittee

- Chief Executive Officer Dannette Smith, Dept. of Health and Human Services, Nebraska (subcommittee co-chair)
- Secretary Lee Norman, Dept. of Health and Environment, Kansas (subcommittee co-chair)
- Representative Colleen Burton, Florida
- Chief Justice Susan Christensen, Supreme Court, Iowa
- Chief Privacy Officer Ted Cotterill, Indiana
- Judge Melanie May, Four District Court of Appeal, Florida
- Chief Justice Bridget McCormack, Supreme Court, Michigan
- Justice Anne McKeig, Supreme Court, Minnesota
- Director Adam Meier, Department of Public Health and Human Services, Montana
- Representative Cindy Ryu, Washington
- Representative Brian Sims, Pennsylvania

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