



Herbert
Henderson
Office of
Minority
Affairs

COVID-19 Advisory Commission on African American Disparities

MINUTES

January 21, 2021

7:30 AM

Via Zoom

Chair: Jill Upson, Chairperson and Director
Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs (HHOMA)

Commissioners: Pastor Rahsaan Armand, Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church
Owens Brown, State Conference of NAACP
Joylynn Fix, WV Offices of the Insurance Commission
Delegate Sean Hornbuckle, House District 16, Cabell County
Mike Jones, Kanawha Institute for Social Research and Action (KISRA)
Reverend James Patterson, Institute Church of the Nazarene
Senator Patricia Puertas-Rucker, Jefferson County, Senatorial District 16
Tiffany Samuels, WVU Cancer Institute
Keisha Saunders, Tug River Health Clinic

Presenters: Dr. Ayne Amjad, Commissioner, BPH; State Health Officer
Dr. James Arnaez, MPH PhD, Lead Epidemiologist, Health Statistics Center
Sonia Chambers, Executive Director, West Virginia Health Information Network
Dr. Clay Marsh, WV COVID-19 Czar, WVU Medicine Vice President

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 a.m. by Director Jill Upson.

Director Jill Upson extended another request to task force members to participate in the “Ambassador Series” about personal vaccine journeys.

Dr. Ayne Amjad shared the following COVID-19 update:

- Today marks one year since COVID-19 was first identified in the United States.
- Over 400,000 COVID-19 deaths in US; over 24 million cases globally; and over 1,800 deaths in West Virginia.
- This is week 5 of the vaccine rollout.

- Asking state to be patient as possible.
- Long term care facilities are completing 2nd round of vaccinations.
- Announced vaccinations for 65 years and older population per CDC recommendation.
- Information about the United Kingdom, South African, and Brazilian variant is coming out quickly.
- Must still wear masks after vaccination since we can still be a carrier of COVID-19.
- Recent reports that monoclonal antibody fights the COVID-19 variants.

Chairperson Jill Upson asked how to obtain minority vaccination data. Secretary Crouch explained that the dashboard data has been updated to include minority vaccine data. He reported difficulty in obtaining county data. The vaccine summary tab on the dashboard has been updated to include vaccinations by race. Secretary Crouch added that we must do better with vaccinating African Americans and minority populations.

Chairperson Upson asked who people should contact if they feel their county is being overlooked.

Secretary Crouch explained that the Governor announced the rollout of registration program for vaccinations. He urged that there must be a call-in system where allows registrants to receive call back, text, email with appointment time. Secretary Crouch announced that a vendor was selected, and its contract accepted. Individuals will eventually be able to register online. Teacher and staff vaccinations for 50 years of age and greater are almost complete.

Romelia Hodges reported a disconnect in returned phone calls to confirm appointments for older people of color. She asked for a way to identify the number that will be used to confirm the appointment since many screen calls.

Secretary Crouch responded that Individuals select their preferred method to receive the appointment confirmation. He assumed the call would come from the health department, but will follow up to confirm.

Senator Rucker expressed concerned for older population in her area who have been lining up hours prior to clinic.

Secretary Crouch stated that scheduled appointments average 10-15 minutes. It could be a local health department process and will follow up.

Reverend Patterson reported that there are more people registering than available vaccines, which could be part of the problem. He reported that some labs are not returning the demographic data with the results.

Secretary Crouch requested the names of the labs to follow-up on those with missing data.

Mike Jones stated that the general population should be patient since there are 27 people taking the calls. He suggested that the initial recipient of the demographic data submit a report to the state, instead of the labs. Assigning an identification number could be helpful.

Secretary Crouch stated that the information needs to be tied to the test result, but an overview of testing data is desired. There are 15-16,000 tests per day. He reported an increase from 36 to 1,000 labs online.

Chat question from Rick Martin: Who will make the call to set up the appointment? Will it be the State, the clinic, a hospital? What if a person registers at multiple locations?

Secretary Crouch responded that there is no call back once information has been given; duplicates will be eliminated. Missed appointments will remain on the priority list in their respective slot; there is no need to call back. He shared that clinics could schedule appointments based on the number of vaccinations received. Missed appointments will remain on the priority list.

Romelia Hodges reported that the race, age, sex, phone numbers are missing based on her personal testing event experiences. The lab results were returned with missing data. She suggested that results be sent directly back to WVHIN to help complete the demographic information.

Dr. James Arnaez reported that tracing the source of the gaps has been an issue.

Romelia Hodges stated that she believes that the health care organizations are entering the demographic data when they deal directly with the patients. The communication gap occurs when the information is not entered into the database by the lab.

Sonia Chambers added that there are a few reasons the data does not come across; both the labs and providers are not filling in data. WVHIN has other sources of data available that can be used to supplement the State's missing data. She stated that WVHIN follow up with the labs and centers to will work with Dr. Arnaez to identify who and what is incomplete or missing. In the meantime, WVHIN can supplement data.

Reverend Patterson commented on the missing data. He urged that we are the customers for these labs; therefore, the requests should be honored. The simplest way is to request with the labs.

- He then reported that his group has moved the testing indoors.
- Focusing on Raleigh and Cabell counties next week.
- Submitted final papers for vaccine funding to the Bureau of Public Health.
- Goal is to be the stand-alone organization providing vaccines to people of color.
- Working to establish a permanent site on the West Side of Charleston.

Secretary Crouch thanked Reverend Patterson for his response to DHHR'S request to offer vaccines, which is making a huge difference.

Dr. Arnaez provided the weekly data summary.

- Level of missing data dropped considerably in comparison to recent weeks.
- Experiencing Christmas holiday spike as expected
- African American and White race experienced similar peaks in positives.
- Gender and age demographics are consistent.
- Mean ages are climbing.
- Central and Eastern regions had at least 2% of total cases in African American population.
- Northwestern and Eastern regions had the highest count of over 200 cases in Other Race group.

Dr. Clay Marsh added that the number of people in ICU's and on ventilators is reducing. West Virginia has the lowest reproduction score in the country. No cases of the variants have been reported in West Virginia yet. West Virginia is close to 100% efficiency in vaccine usage. Dr. Marsh provided the average COVID-19 death in the state

is 77 years. People over 70 make up 77% of deaths with half occurring in nursing homes. Additional statistics were shared. Dr. Marsh explained that effects of the immunization, IGG protein, and IGA protein.

Owens Brown asked what role Marshall University's Minority Health Institute has played during the pandemic.

Secretary Crouch stated that he was not sure if Reverend Patterson has worked with them, but DHHR not had any involvement.

Reverend Patterson reported Dr. Woart from the Minority Health Institute has served as an evaluator on the immune and vaccine projects. Dr. Woart is well-known nationally. He stated that the Office of Minority Health should be more prominent; Marshall should be a partner in this endeavor.

Senator Patricia Rucker asked if side effects or adverse reactions to the vaccine are being tracked.

Dr. Amjad shared that all adverse reactions get reported to the CDC, which includes nausea, fevers, rashes, severe reactions, etc. This information is not documented on the website.

Sonia Chambers added that she will continue to work with Dr. Arnaez to enhance data in the identification of race and ethnicity to other data sources. She will reach out to those submitting to their system with missing data.

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 a.m.

*No votes or actions were taken at the meeting.

**A recording of the full meeting is available at <https://minorityaffairs.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx> .