

Community Equity Advisory Board

March 12, 2024
Noon - 1:00 pm
Zoom meeting

Attendees: Kurtis Enick, Van Kuno, Clarence Shaw, Lika Smith, Giselle Zapata-Garcia

Absent: John Agyapong, Amelia Bai, DanVon'ique Bletson-Reed, Taniela Tokailagi, Mindy Woods

Department

Staff: Dennis Worsham, Helen Wong, Pia Sampaga-Khim, Kelly Grimsley

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Pia Sampaga-Khim at 12:06. The meeting was held via Zoom video conference. There was a quorum present.

Approval of Notes

It was moved by Van Kuno and seconded by Kurtis Enick to approve the meeting notes of January 9, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

Introduction of Interim Health Equity Policy Analyst

Dennis Worsham explained his strong commitment to equity social justice within Snohomish County and part of that was to find the right person to hire that would be focused both internally and externally on some of the work that the department is doing about advancing racial equity, in particular. The department posted the position, went through the process but did not find an ideal candidate. The department will post the position again, but there is a lot of work that's starting to move right now. The department thought it was very important to find an internal person to help guide this work along with a consultant that we will soon have working with the department. Helen Wong was asked if she would step into the interim Health Equity Policy Analyst role and help lead the way. Helen has been the departments grants coordinator, but she comes to with a lot of experience and work doing equity and social justice in the community in different roles that she's had.

Helen Wong briefly described her past work experience of the last 20 years as connecting with community and amplifying community voices. She has been doing equity work mostly in the nonprofit sector and her background is in social work. She mostly worked with immigrant and refugee services both in Canada and the USA. She's worked in postsecondary educational institutions and as a consultant on organizational change in anti-oppression and anti-racism and in community-based research. Several members introduced themselves and their backgrounds and welcomed Ms. Wong.

Discussion of equity RFP's

Dennis Worsham explained that when the district became part of the county department there was a committee formed that was made up of both community members and governmental staff to look at ways to strengthen public health. As they did that, one of the recommendations was titled the Gold Standard Review. The question for the health department was, what are the gold standards that we should be looking towards, where are we currently and what do we need to do to close any gaps. The department is going to focus on strategic planning and how are we doing as a department around equity and health disparities and inequities of health in the community. The department is hiring a consulting firm to help do the assessment for us. Helen Wong discussed an RFP that will look at the department's internal equity policies and processes through an equity lens and help inform with the strategic plan. There will also be 2 other RFP's that she will be coordinating that she's just beginning to coordinate. One of the

RFP's will be a community-informed process to find out what the experiences and the data are that will help us identify places locally of health-based discrimination and our role as a health department to promote well-being. The other rfp is a leadership workforce develop equity training.

Director's report

Last year was mostly about getting the health district fully dissolved and integrated into the county process. This year is about completing an assessment and getting very clear about what our priorities are as a health department. Next year will be about the implementation of those priorities of our strategic plan and direction. Dennis has asked each of the divisions and programs to develop 3-to-5-year strategies within their own areas. Updating of all the departments public health codes is also a main project for this year. Other topics he covered were opioids being a leading cause of death for some populations and age groups, and violence that is going on in our communities. The department will need the boards voice and their own lived experience in how these things get influenced and shaped going forward.

Board membership

The department received an application from an interested community member to join the board. Nicole Thomsen was absent so she will discuss this with members at the April meeting.

Notes

- Pia Sampaga-Khim informed the group that DOH had given the department cases of COVID tests to be distributed throughout the community. If anyone's community needs some, contact Pia at the department.
- Helen Wong discussed that her, Pia Sampaga-Khim and Samara Jamison-Heydon started an informal ad hoc committee of women community leaders in the county and if anyone would like to join, please let her know. They are having their first multicultural fair on April 27th, 2024, at the Carl Gipson center in Everett from 10 – 2:30 pm. It's free for all vendors and there will be free food, children's activities, COVID tests, information about navigating the healthcare system and information about chronic diseases to name a few.
- Pia Sampaga-Khim and Helen Wong are looking at bringing a community navigator program to the Health Department. Pia or Helen might be reaching out to Board members to ask questions and advice as they are putting the program together.

Next Meeting

April 9, 2024, 12:00 - 1:30PM via Zoom