

Community Equity Advisory Board

April 8, 2025
Noon - 1:30 pm
Zoom meeting

Attendees: John Agyapong, DanVon'ique Bletson-Reed, Lidia Elala, Kurtis Enick, Van Kuno, Lika Smith, Dr. Rabi Yunusa, Giselle Zapata-Garcia

Absent: Mindy Woods

Department Staff: Dennis Worsham, Nicole Thomsen, Helen Wong

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Helen Wong at 12:00. The meeting was held via Zoom video conference. There was a quorum present.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by DanVon'ique Bletson-Reed and seconded by Kurtis Enick, to approve the meeting minutes of February 11, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

Introductions

Everyone introduced themselves and shared their motivations for participating in the group with a focus on equity efforts and community roles. Wil Johnson provided an overview of his work with Office of Social Justice as Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer. Wil Johnson answered questions from the group, with a discussion on the impact of federal funding cuts on public health and the increasing cases of measles in Washington State. The group extended a standing invitation to Wil Johnson and will also be scheduling him to give periodical updates to the CEAB.

Health Director's Report

It's National Public Health week and Dennis Worsham thanked everyone for contributing to improve the health and well-being of the community. The first update he reported on was regarding the targeted cuts to public health funding as well as the elimination of thousands of CDC positions. The cuts that came to the Snohomish County Health department totaled 3.4 million dollars which is about 10% of our budget. The cuts were with COVID budgets that were due to end June 2025 and were funding the Community Navigator program. The Department leaders decided that our work in the community is one of our highest priorities and we didn't want to jeopardize those relationships so we committed to continue that program by identifying other funding we will use to maintain the services and contracts. Another update is the 3 documented cases of measles in WA state. 2 of the cases are in our county and we are working hard to interrupt transmission of the disease and increase vaccines in the community. We are only at 80% in school age children that are vaccinated so our focus is also prevention. We have just purchased a mobile van that will be used in the community for vaccines and outreach. The Board requested the department send notices to specific community groups that may be exposed with additional resources.

Community Navigator Program Update

Helen Wong reported that there are currently 12 agencies that are part of the Community Navigator Program and over 50 community navigators that are in the program. The program is due to end June 30,

2025, and the Department is working on applications to receive funding so the navigator program could be sustained.

Equity Action Planning Retreat

The health department is planning a retreat for May 9th, 2025. There will be consultants that will facilitate the meeting for the day. The department is trying to work with the Sound Foundation to compensate board members for volunteering on the Equity Advisory Board. Currently, there are a lot of limitations, but we will continue exploring this and keep the board updated.

Proposal for CEAB Co-Chair

Helen Wong reported that after last month's meeting, Kurtis Enick discussed an idea of potentially having a co-chair. The group was asked to review the board's by-laws, and the idea can be revisited at the retreat and/or after when we come together with our work plan. Nicole Thomsen discussed the early days when the CEAB was formed, and a steering committee helped advise it. The current members that were on the board from the beginning believe it would be a good time to revisit the conversation. The bylaws were last reviewed in 2021 so the group agrees this is a great time to revisit and possibly reshape them.

CEAB Applicants

Nicole Thomsen received an application online from a community member requesting to be a member of the CEAB. She will forward it to Helen Wong who will send it to all members for review and consideration. Helen Wong will conduct an interview with the new applicant and invite interested CEAB members to participate. CEAB members will provide feedback via email on the new applicant before the May meeting.

CEAB General Updates

- Members will consider and provide feedback on changing the meeting duration from 90 minutes to 60 minutes.
- DanVon'ique Bletson-Reed provided information on an upcoming event sponsored by the Snohomish County Black Heritage Committee. She will email Helen Wong flyers of upcoming events to be distributed to CEAB members.
- Van Kuno updated the group on requesting funding from the Department of Commerce to print "Know Your Rights" cards in multiple languages. If the request is supported, 20,000 cards will be printed and distributed throughout the county.
- World Refugee Day is being held on June 13th, 2025, at the Edmonds College. Dennis Worsham has agreed to be a speaker.
- John Agyapong became Chair of the NAACP of Snohomish County and needed someone to be on the team to report on Public Health. John thanked Nicole Thomsen for being gracious and accepting the position.
- Helen Wong with follow-up with members with resources that were shared during the meeting in the group chat.

Next Meeting

June 10, 2025, 12:00 - 1:30PM via Zoom