

Women's Health Initiative Advisory Council Meeting

Meeting Minutes

September 21, 2023, 1-3 pm

The minutes from the May meeting were e-mailed to the members prior to this meeting. The meeting of the Women's Health Advisory Council (WHAC) was called to order at 1:02 pm by Kathryn Fiandt, Chair. The meeting was held in person at the Nebraska State Office Building, Sarpy Room. Quorum was present.

Roll Call (Introductions)

Members Present:

Kathryn Fiandt
Erica Anderson
Celeste Illian
Jennifer Severe-Oforah
Timothy Tesmer

Samantha Kenning
Rachel Thompson
Victoria Vinton

DHHS Staff Present:

Shirley Pickens-White
Leah Snyder

Members Absent:

Tami DeBonis
Janelle Ali-Dinar

Guests:

Senator Anna Wishart

In accordance with § 84-1411 of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act, copies of the agenda were 1) e-mailed to the Board members. Agenda was also posted on the DHHS web site at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Womens-Health-Initiatives-Contact-Us.aspx>. The Women's Health Advisory Council Meeting Notice along with the agenda were posted on the Public Meeting Calendar at least 10 days before the meeting.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

May's meeting minutes were approved. Kate motioned to approve and Dr. Tesmer seconded. In favor: Kate Fiandt, Erica Anderson, Celeste Illian, Jennifer Severe-Oforah, Timothy Tesmer, Opposed: None, Abstentions: None. **Motion carried.**

Council discussed membership- Shirley again mentioned that three individuals were recommended to the Governor's Office earlier this year and we are still waiting to hear on those appointments. It was also mentioned that no additional applications have been received from the Governor's Office. The process for application, challenges, and the dynamic of the process was also discussed. Recommendations are sent, and the Governor makes a decision on who to appoint. DHHS will continue to send applications to the Governor's Office.

There were no public comments or outstanding past public comments.

DHHS Report Outs:

Dr. Tesmer provided a brief introduction and a little overview about this role as Chief Medical Officer.

Jennifer Severe-Oforah provided an overview of the Lifespan Health Unit of the Department of Health and Human Services Public Health Division. (Handout provided).

The Office of Women's Health submitted their annual report to the Legislature and a copy will be provided to each member.

Speaker:

Senator Anna Wishart provided comments on recently passed legislation to include expansion of health coverage for new mothers to 6 months and Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program funding. She also made suggestions on how the Council could go about establishing relationships with senators. Other topics of discussion included: benefits of financial well-being on mothers and infants, increase in teen pregnancy in rural Nebraska, undocumented and other people who are often missed by healthcare programs and efforts, rural farmer suicide, especially in Blacks, and access and cost of early childhood care centers (daycares).

Council Discussion

In coming meetings, the Council will focus more on the Legislature. **Members will give their recommendations to DHHS on topics they would like speakers to address in meetings.** There will also be presentations on the Plan of Safe Care (pregnant women who use substances) program pilot, epidemiology data on women's and children's health (one notable trend is the increase in syphilis in Nebraska and by extension congenital syphilis), the Maternal Mortality Review Committee report and March of Dimes report.

There was also a brief discussion on the Council's Strategic Plan. This will be addressed in more detail at the next meeting. Council members were also asked to provide DHHS information on action taken and action they want to take so it can be included in the Women's Health Initiative annual report.

Membership and vacancy update

Vacancies remain the same. Members were encouraged to continue to ask others to apply.

Subcommittee Report-Outs/ Next Agenda topics:

Membership Committee: They meet once a month.

Legislative committee: They are planning an ice cream social to meet Senators in the Spring. In the meantime, they will begin to look at priority topics to share with Senators. They are considering a Women's health policy day in the Fall of 2024, involving women from all over the state. For the next meeting, they will develop a proactive agenda and look at more focused items instead of a larger list of bills- develop legislative priorities. **Dr. Tesmer will provide a brief word on the history, mission, accomplishments, focus, and policy of the Council to the Senators at the Social.**

Strategic Planning Committee: The Council discussed developing an action plan to go along with the Strategic Plan. **DHHS will bring some templates of frameworks for action plans for the Strategic Planning committee to look at. Members will look at the Strategic Plan and bring any comments to the next meeting.**

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be virtual and held on December 7th, 2023, from 1-3 pm via Webex.

Adjourn:

Meeting adjourned at 2:56 pm by Kate Fiandt.

Minutes by Leah Snyder

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