Health Equity Advisory Commission

Joint Committee Meeting of
House Health Care and Senate Health and Welfare Committees

Presented by members of the Commission ● April 12, 2023

Agenda

1. Overview of Health Equity Advisory Commission
2. Summary of the HEAC's 2023 Annual Report
3. Deeper Dive: Budget and Fiscal Proposals
4. Final Notes & Reflections
5. Question & Answer

HEAC Overview
RE-INTRODUCTION

A 30-member Commission consisting of various state and advocacy representatives created to promote health equity and eradicate health disparities among Vermonters; amplify voices of impacted communities regarding decisions made by the State that impact health equity; and provide strategic guidance on the development of the Office of Health Equity.

- Office of Health Equity (OHE) development guidance
- OHE advice and recomendations
- State agency policy review and monitoring
- Analysis of laws, rules and programs

- Advise VDH and General Assembly on funding
- Distribute grants for community and neighborhood projects
- Advise General Assembly on cultural training for healthcare workers

Annual Report
TOPICS ADDRESSED

- Whole of Government Equity Agenda

- Programmatic Approach/Framework

- Community Engagement

- Legal and Administrative Support

- Office of Health Equity

- Policies and Programs

- Funding and Grants

- Training and Continuing Education

HEAC Annual Report

- 37 actionable recommendations.
- Requests baseline appropriation of $1.57 million.
- Addresses Legislature's questions:
  - What funding is needed for the HEAC?
  - What funding is needed for the Office of Health Equity?
  - What would the Office of Health Equity look like?
    - Structure, responsibilities, and jurisdiction
    - Staffing
    - Populations served
    - Duties of the Office
    - Timeline to implement the office

Whole of Government Approach

- Health equity must be pursued with an understanding of the persistent nature of the disparate outcomes across all Social Determinants of Health – housing, education, employment, economic development, criminal justice, etc.
- Disparities in the social determinants of health compound adverse outcomes, including poor health, to a life altering, life threatening degree.
- Therefore
  - Advancing equity is the responsibility of the whole of our government
  - All Agencies and Departments within State Government must address inequities in their existing and new policies and programs.

Programmatic Approach

To build health equity, the State must make unified effort on policy, training, data collection, and more. This will require:

- A standardized approach across all government policies and programs using an equity framework.
- Coordination by a centralized authority, the Office of Health Equity.
- Decision-making that is Informed by impacted communities.
- Dedicated administrative and legal support, as well as access to expertise in data analysis, stakeholder engagement, interagency collaboration, policy analysis, and the root causes of historical inequities.

Office of Health Equity
Structure & Responsibilities

- The Office should be charged with working across State government to promote health equity and eradicate disparities in health outcomes and access to healthcare and in the social determinants that contribute to poor health among Vermonters, including particularly those who are Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color; individuals who are LGBTQ; and individuals with disabilities.
- The Office should be authorized to seek the assistance and avail itself of the services of employees of any State agency, department, board, bureau, or commission as it may require and as may be available to it for its purposes.
- All State agencies, departments, boards, bureaus, or commissions should be authorized and directed to cooperate with the Office of Health Equity, to the extent consistent with law.
- The Office should be an independent instrumentality of the State of Vermont in order to facilitate the charge of working across the whole of State government.
- The Office should be advised by the Health Equity Advisory Commission.

Office of Health Equity
Powers, Duties, & Functions

- Leading and coordinating health equity efforts.
- Publishing data reports documenting health disparities.
- Providing education to the public on health equity, health disparities, and social determinants of health.
- Conducting State-level strategic planning to eliminate health inequities.
- Coordinating and staffing the Health Equity Advisory Commission.
- Building collaborative partnerships with communities to identify and promote health equity strategies.
- Providing grants to community-based organizations to support individuals who are Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color; individuals who are LGBTQ; and individuals with disabilities and to support ongoing community-based projects that are designed to reduce or eliminate health disparities in Vermont.

Office of Health Equity

Timeline

Apr 12, 2023
HEAC presents report contents to General Assembly

Jan 1, 2024
Director of Health Equity shall be appointed by the HEAC

Jul 1, 2024
Director of Health Equity to hire staff to the extent funds are made available by the General Assembly

"The **life-altering impact** of the compounded adverse outcomes of interconnected Social Determinants of Health demand an aggressive **whole of government equity agenda**."

Budget Needs

- Fund the HEAC for ongoing '24 operations

- Legal and Administrative Support

- DEI Organizational Consulting

- Robust Community Engagement

- Staffing and and overhead for OHE

- Community and neighborhood-based projects and programming

Budget Needs

ITEM	COST
HEAC Governance, Staffing and Administration	$120,000.00
Assessment of State Policies and Programs (Consulting)	$160,000.00
Community-based and Neighborhood-based Grants	$750,000.00
HEAC Compensation & Community Engagement/Facility Expenses	$90,000.00
Office Of Health Equity Initial Staffing, Overhead and Indirect Expenses (ED and 2 Managers)	$450,000.00
TOTAL	**$1,570,000.00**

Questions?

Health Equity Advisory Commission

Report | **Website**