

HUB Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
Virtual Teleconference
Wednesday, October 28th, 2020
10:00 am

Attendees: Council Members

Kristen Hess	Russel Parker
Dorrine Fokes	Mary Williams-Stover
Annette Stevenson	Greg Richardson
Latif Kaid	Vinnie Goel
Iris Reese	Kimberly Leazer
CC Lamberth	Doug Morton
Terrence Holt	Odessa McGlown

Absent Council Members: Jeremy Collins, Calvin Stevens, Lenwood Long, Sr., Aaron Thomas, Tiffany Peguise-Powers, Valerie Jordan.

- Additional Attendees: Machele Sanders, *Secretary, Department of Administration*; Betty Marrow-Taylor, *Deputy Secretary, Department of Administration*; Ben Money, *Deputy Secretary, Department of Health & Human Services*; Tammie Hall, *Director, HUB Office*
- HUB Office Staff Attendees: Alicia Lyon, LaShona Johnson, John Guenther, Traci Herrod, Alisha Puckett, Melissa Terrell, Jamalh Greene, Sharonetta McIntyre, Nicole GyeNyame, Anousone Kettisack, Jakala Wilson, Arthur Anderson, Iris Reese- Board Member
- Guests: Michele Clark-Jenkins, *Senior Director, Griffin & Strong*
- **Call to Order**
 - CC Lamberth, Advisory Council Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.
- **Roll Call**
 - **The Council Chair** asked for roll call and indicated a quorum was present. **The Council Chair** agreed and asked for a motion to move and accept the minutes. The minutes were approved and accepted. **The Council Chair** asked for a motion to approve and accept the agenda Kimberly Leazer and seconded by Doug Morton. The

minutes were approved and accepted by a motion from Kimberly Leazer and seconded by Dorrine Fokes.

- **Secretary Machel Sanders, Department of Administration**

- Secretary Sanders formally welcomed all guests and thanked everyone for attending this meeting during the pandemic.
- Governor Cooper proclaimed October 2020 as Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Month. MED Week events have been taking place since September 2020 and has built up to the HUB Office's first virtual MED Week event on October 30th. This year's theme is: "Pivoting: Diversifying in the Midst of a Pandemic" and will consist of 2 sessions focusing on COVID-19 impacts and best practices moving forward. The HUB Office will also be presenting the Andrea Harris Champion Award.
- The HUB Office recently launched RETOOLNC – a grant program that will award \$12M to HUBs struggling due to COVID-19. This opportunity is happening through a partnership with The Institute and The Carolina Small Business Development Fund.
- The Disparity Study will be released very soon and will be critical as this will be the first comprehensive HUB study to be performed in over a decade. This study will provide results on how well our state agencies are engaging with HUBs and identify areas for improvement.
- During this time, please remember to stay safe and focus on the 3 W's.

- **Ben Money, Deputy Secretary, Department of Health & Human Services**

- A PowerPoint presentation was shared entitled: "NC Historically Marginalized Populations (HMP) Program" and reviewed the disproportionate impacts that COVID-19 is currently causing certain North Carolinians.
- Approximately 263,000 cases have been reported since the beginning of the pandemic in NC. The current death count remains around 4200. The state continues to see the virus spreading in communities across NC.
- HMP groups include those individuals, groups, and communities that have historically been denied access to services across economic, political, and cultural dimensions because of racism and/or discrimination. HMPS are often identified by race, ethnicity, and access to resources.
- HMPS are experiencing symptoms and deaths due to COVID-19 at significantly higher rates. Most notably because of employment situations as many Black and LatinX persons have fewer options to telework and are often considered essential workers. This group of essential workers includes cashiers, food delivery and taxi drivers, childcare services, health aides, housekeepers, and agriculture workers. Since they are

- essential, these workers are increasing their exposure to the virus. These types of essential workers usually lack a living wage and are not offered sick leave days. Access to health care is an issue for this group.
- DHHS has recently created a COVID-19 program response to decrease these disparities. The new program includes prevention, testing, and a need for services that support those who are in quarantine. The program includes participation from external and internal stakeholders as well as members of the health care community.
 - HMP core objective include prevention, testing, contact tracing, wraparound services, behavioral health, and procurement. DHHS is continuing to work with manufacturers and researchers as a cure can only come from a vaccine.
 - Prevention in HMPS comes from misinformation, lack of trust, challenges to social distancing. The DHHS strategy to assist with prevention is to offer Hispanic/LatinX consultants and contractors for increased communication, to distribute PPE supplies through CBOs (community-based organizations) and offers grants to CBOs doing this work. The 3 W's are also crucial to prevention.
 - Testing in HMPS can be difficult as it is hard to identify when and how the virus is being spread. The DHHS strategy to address this is to offer community testing in high priority and marginalized populations. This will be done by partnering with CBOs and hosting testing events in these areas.
 - Contact tracing / wrap around services in HMPS is important as there is a need for contract tracers to be representatives of their communities. This will help identify the challenges of quarantine and social distancing and isolation and aid in the wrap around services that can be offered. The DHHS strategy to assist with this is the creation of the NC Contact Tracing Collaborative with the intentional recruitment and training of HMP staff. The development of quarantine protocol will further assist in wrap around services and leverage the ability of CBOs to deliver the correct services needed.
 - Behavior health in HMPS is an increasing problem as there are health challenges associated with the pandemic and few providers focus on the needs of HMPs. The DHHS strategy to address this is to run PSA campaigns focused on behavioral health targeted as HMPs. The Hope4NC crisis line has also been re-opened and the development of a behavioral health initiative is underway to help focus on substance abuse, which is seeing a rise across the state.
 - Procurement for HMPs requires the engagement of CBOs serving HMPs as the DHHS grant and procurement process is daunting and labor intensive. The DHHS strategy currently is to assess the procurement processes in place and identify barriers that may hinder HMPs. DHHS is also focusing on HMP recruitment efforts and is partnering with NC HUB to assist with HMP vendor training.
 - Moving forward, DHHS is highly focused on controlling community transmission, working with local enforcement entities, and recognizes the impact from neighboring

states. DHHS is rolling out educational information and researching the physical impacts that COVID-19 has.

Question from Doug Morton: What media are you using to communicate to HMPs?

Answer from Ben Money: We are using broad scale approach. We have contracted with CBOs to deliver messages and face coverings in certain areas and we are also utilizing all forms of social media to get messages across including Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

- **Michelle Clark Jenkins, Senior Director, Griffin & Strong**

- The disparity study team is now in the stage of drafting the final report. All data has been collected and the team is compiling it all for the final report.
- The expectation is that by the time the HUB Advisory Council meets again in February, the study will be complete.

- **Break Out Group Sessions – Construction and Purchasing**

- **Report Out – Reconvene Full Council**

➤ Annette Stevenson reported out for purchasing.

- Much of the committee's focus has been around rolling out the disparity study and the committee is still working to ensure that the results are delivered as a tool for implementation in a positive way.
- The HUB Office reporting has been successful this year, despite COVID-19 impacting some auditing. The quarterly benchmarking report is especially important for goods and services. Director Hall noted that state agency reporting is shifting from purchase order creation to actual money spent with HUB vendors starting this fiscal year.
- The committee is still prioritizing working with procurement agencies to focus on statewide term contracts to ensure inclusivity and that the state is using best practices. The goal is to mirror the process in place for construction.
- The committee recommended the need for more in-depth training for HUB firms with procurement and so far, the HUB Office has done a great job during COVID-19 to offer virtual trainings and opportunities.
- Discussion during report out included need to focus on how to get second tier spend reporting.

- Terrence Holt reported out for construction.
 - The committee has been focused on the impacts of COVID-19 for construction and retail projects. Many projects at Universities and airports are experiencing budgetary concerns.
 - However, several large capital projects have recently been announced and awarded as well as some private/public projects. There has also been a spike in residential construction projects as the housing industry remains strong.
 - The committee wants to continue to focus on finding projects and directing HUBs to those projects so that the pandemic does not slow down opportunities.
 - Latif Kahid, State Construction Office (SCO), spoke about the impacts COVID-19 has had on budgets and specially on smaller projects because of the uncertainty involved. SCO is concerned about the upcoming budget and lack of potential funding for projects and is asking owners, contractors, and designers reach out to local representatives to express the need for funding and their support in the construction industry as a whole.
 - The committee discussed strategies for how businesses can close out the 2020 year and emphasized the need to plan for 2021 budgetary impacts.

➤ **Open Floor Discussion**

- Director Hall encouraged all to join the HUB MED Week event on October 28th.
- The next meeting is set for February 2021.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:09PM with a motion by Terrence Holt.

All members exited the teleconference by approximately 12:12PM.