



Montgomery County Commission on Health

ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2021

July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

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Commission on Health FY21 Annual Report

The Commission on Health (COH) respectfully submits its Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Annual Report. Working both with the County's leadership as well as the dedicated, professional and conscientious staff of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the COH focused on key public health issues. The COH also provided recommendations to county leadership and DHHS staff on improving county resident health and well-being.

In FY21, the COH focused on communicable disease, school health, racial equity and public health data and modernization. The COH explored topics related to Healthy Montgomery metrics, reports on health equity and other county data, and staff needs and capacity.

Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus of the COH changed dramatically as the pandemic brought the existence of health disparities in Montgomery County to the forefront. The pandemic reinforced the need for additional epidemiological resources within the County to support data analysis and reporting. The COH formed a Public Health Data and Modernization workgroup to strengthen data collection, analysis, and dissemination. The workgroup explored topics related to Healthy Montgomery metrics, reports on health equity and other county data, and staff needs and capacity. In FY22, the COH hopes to continue its efforts with the addition of cross cutting priorities that are geared towards tackling equity in health.

It has been an honor to serve as the chair of the COH during FY21. The Commission is filled with 19 dedicated and very accomplished professionals who willingly volunteer their time and knowledge to leave a lasting positive effect on DHHS and Montgomery County Residents. The Commission also benefits from the expertise of ex-officio DHHS members, support from DHHS staff and liaisons from other commissions. The COH respectfully submits the attached FY21 Annual Report and looks forward to continued work and collaboration to improve public health and advise the County Council and County Executive.

Desiree de la Torre, MPH, MBA
Chair, Commission on Health

Mission and Purpose

The primary mission of the Montgomery County Commission on Health (COH) is to advise the County Executive and the County Council on public health issues, programs, services and the allocation of funds devoted to public health needs and to monitor and assess the priorities of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (MCDHHS) in its efforts to address the health needs of residents in this County. The purpose of this report is to comply with the annual requirement that the COH provide the County Executive and the County Council with an update on the activities of the COH from July 2020 through June 2021.

**CHAPTER 24-24 OF
THE MONTGOMERY
COUNTY CODE
PROVIDES
AUTHORITY FOR THE
COMMISSION ON
HEALTH. THE
COMMISSION ON
HEALTH (COH) WAS
ESTABLISHED ON
JULY 1, 1988**

Structure

The Commission is comprised of 19 voting members with representation from consumers and providers of health services in the County. As dictated by County Code, the COH also has a representative from the Montgomery County Medical Society. In FY21, there were 11 consumers, and 8 providers, including the Medical Society representative. The ex officio (non-voting) members of the COH include: the County Health Officer; the Montgomery County Public Schools liaison; and the County Council liaison. The COH continues to represent a diverse cross-section of Montgomery County residents.

Membership consisted of 19 members who were racially and ethnically diverse and vary in age, gender, geography and experience in health policy, public health, and the health care system.

The COH Chair and Vice Chair are elected by COH members and serve one-year terms. During FY21 Desiree de la Torre was the Chair of the Commission and Christopher Burt was the Vice Chair.

Meetings

The COH meets at 6 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month (except in August) at 401 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD 20850. All meetings are open to the general public. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the COH met monthly via the virtual meeting platform Zoom for the entire FY21 including a meeting in August. COH members voted to meet in August due to missed meetings in April and May of 2020.

At a minimum, every member of the Commission is expected to either serve on one workgroup and, when possible, as a liaison to other health-related County boards, commissions, committees or minority health initiatives and programs.

With its broad perspective of public health, the COH recognizes the value of collaboration and communication with other health-related boards, commissions and committees. Many commissioners have an area of specialization, interest or constituency of public health and are therefore encouraged to serve as liaisons with other relevant health-related boards, commissions and committees (BCCs). Integral to this area of special interest is the constraint that all actions are in voice of the entire COH and not self-serving in any manner. Finally, members of the COH also served on committees that allowed the COH to conduct its business such as the membership, nominating and retreat planning committees. These committees require significant time and are in addition to the monthly scheduled meetings.

FY21 MEMBERSHIP

CONSUMER REPRESENTATIVES

Jonathan Arias, PhD
Alana Aronin, MPH
Elliott Brown, MS
Christopher Burt, MPH, MBA, MS
Marcela Campoli, PhD, MHA
Desiree de la Torre, MPH, MBA
Sarah Galbraith-Emami, JD, MPH
Amy Gyau-Moyer, MS, MBA
Kendra Harris, MBA
Jessica Kronstadt, MPP
Jelani Murrain, JD, MHSA

PROVIDER REPRESENTATIVES

Crystal DeVance-Wilson, PhD, MBA, PHCNS-BC
Nadia Hashimi, MD
Lenna Israbian-Jamgochian, PharmD
Brittne Jackson, DPT, MPH
Terri McGuire, PA, MHSc, MPH
Rosemary Payne, MSN, RN
Fabienne Santel, MD, MPH

MEDICAL SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVE

Brent Berger, MD

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS (NON-VOTING)

Marla Caplon, RD, LD, Director, School Wellness Initiatives, MCPS
Cara Grant, EdD, Supervisor, Health and Physical Education, MCPS (*Replaced Marla Caplon, April 2021*)
Travis Gayles, MD, PHD, Chief, Public Health Services, Health Officer, DHHS
Linda McMillan, Senior Legislative Analyst, Montgomery County Council

STAFF

Vanessa Kachipande, MPH, MCHES, Program Manager, DHHS
Karen Thompkins, MPH, Program Manager, DHHS
Brittany Foushee, Public Health Associate, DHHS

MEET THE MEMBERS

Jonathan Arias

Jonathan is a Health Science Administrator at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, where he helps the organization identify and invest in transformative biomedical research efforts to improve human health. Prior to joining the NIH, he was a professor at the University of Maryland College Park where he studied protective biological responses to environmental toxins. He has served as a scientific expert on Federal advisory committees on food safety and human health and has a long record of service aimed at improving public education. He received his M.S. at Purdue University and Ph.D. at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

Alana Aronin

Alana is President of Forte Group Consulting, a consulting firm specializing in public policy, community organizing, and public relations services for the broad range of public health interests. She has extensive experience in training advocates to create change at all levels of policy and building grassroots mobilizations to advance public health agendas. Alana has a MPH from The University of Michigan, and an undergraduate degree in Public Policy from James Madison College of Michigan State University.

Brent Berger

Brent is an internist with Bethesda Medical Associates, a primary care practice with a focus on prevention and wellness. A native of Montgomery County, he has been practicing here since 1990, and is on the staff at Suburban Hospital. Brent received his BA from Johns Hopkins University and his MD from the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

Elliott Brown

Elliott is George Washington University Hospital's Associate Administrator. In that role, he oversees support and ancillary services at the hospital. He received his Bachelor of Business Administration, with a minor in Public Health, from George Washington University and his Master of Science in Health Systems Administration from Georgetown University. Elliott also served as an EMT in Montgomery County for more than 10 years.

Christopher Burt

Chris serves as a Special Volunteer of the Health Inequities and Global Health Branch within the Center for Translation Research and Implementation Science (CTRIS) at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), National Institutes of Health (NIH). Chris' academic background includes a B.S. in Social Science from Indiana University, M.S. in Exercise Science from California University of Pennsylvania, M.B.A in Applied Management from Indiana Wesleyan University and a M.P.H. in Epidemiology and Emergency Management from Benedictine University, Lisle, IL.

Marcela Campoli

Marcela is the ANCC (American Nurse Credentialing Center) Director of the Institute for Credentialing Research and Quality Management, and Lead Coach and Member of Georgetown University's Bias Reduction Improvement Committee pursuing improved commitment against biases of all types and increased racial Equity. In the community, she serves as pro-bono President of Cares4Health's Board of Directors, an organization providing access to high-quality health care to

MEET THE MEMBERS

immigrants and uninsured individuals in general. She holds a doctorate in health economics, a master's degree in health administration, and a baccalaureate degree in business administration (BBA). She is certified by the American Society of Quality as a Quality Improvement/Performance Manager, and completed a WHO/PAHO International Health residency.

Desiree de la Torre

Desiree is the Director of Community Affairs and Population Health Improvement for Children's National Health System in Washington, DC. She leads the organization's population health improvement planning process, including support for community-based organizations, health equity, and compliance with federal community benefit regulations. She received a BS degree in Psychobiology from the University of California, Los Angeles, a MPH from Boston University, and a MBA from The Johns Hopkins University.

Crystal DeVance-Wilson

Crystal DeVance-Wilson is a faculty member at the University of Maryland School of Nursing. She is a board-certified public health clinical nurse specialist with over 30 years of experience in nursing. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing and business administration from Suffolk University, University of Maryland School of Nursing, and the University of Baltimore and received her PhD from the University of Maryland School of Nursing. Crystal's research interests include medication adherence, health behaviors, and health disparities.

Sarah Galbraith-Emami

Sarah has spent over 15 years working in issues around international and comparative health law and policy for the World Health Organization and other international organizations. She currently works as a senior consultant in tobacco product regulation for WHO and teaches as an adjunct faculty at American University. Sarah received her law degree from Georgetown University Law Center and her Masters in Public Health from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health.

Amy Gyau-Moyer

Amy is a Senior Program Manager for Community Health at Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States where she is responsible for leading targeted public health initiatives inclusive of Kaiser Permanente's food security portfolio, strategy for effective community health communications, health policy advocacy and local community-based initiatives. With over two decades of experience in the healthcare, social and human services arenas, she has facilitated public health initiatives for nonprofit and government organizations centered around mitigating health disparities. Amy holds an MS in Management and Public Relations in addition to an MBA both obtained from the University of Maryland. Her undergraduate studies focused on Healthcare Administration at the Washington Adventist University.

Nadia Hashimi

Nadia is a pediatrician, an internationally bestselling author, and public speaker. She is a member of the US-Afghan Women's Council, a member of the Gaithersburg Book Festival organizing committee, and board member of Aschiana Foundation, Sahar Education for Girls and Kallion. She graduated from Brandeis University with a BA in Biology and Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies. She obtained her medical degree from SUNY Downstate.

MEET THE MEMBERS

Kendra Harris

Kendra is a medical liaison where she is directly responsible for overseeing the development, coordination, and execution of The Living Legacy Foundations programmatic efforts to increase and raise awareness for organ, eye and tissue donation. Prior to joining The Living Legacy Foundation, she worked as a Licensed Funeral Director in Silver Spring, MD. Kendra received a B.S. in Biology from Norfolk State University, an A.S in Mortuary Science from Gupton Jones College of Funeral Service and an M.B.A. from the University of Maryland University College. She is committed to serving her community and advocating for the citizens of Montgomery County.

Lenna Israbian-Jamgochian

Lenna is a pharmacist with more than 20 years of experience in her field. She is a District Pharmacy Manager for Safeway/Albertsons and currently manages 35 pharmacies in Maryland and Delaware. She received her Bachelors in Pharmacy from Ohio State University and her Doctorate in Pharmacy from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Jessica Kronstadt

Jessica is the Vice President for Program, Research and Evaluation at the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). In this role, she oversees the administration of the national health department accreditation program, as well as efforts to evaluate the program and promote research relevant to accreditation.

Terri McGuire

Terri is a Certified Physician Assistant with experience in Primary Care, Urgent Care and Liver Transplant Surgery as well as Research Clinician in HIV-focused trials. She received her Bachelor of Science from Wake Forest University, Master of Public Health from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro and Master of Health Science with Physician Assistant Certificate from Duke University. Terri is passionate about the ways in which public health and medicine intersect and she is thrilled about helping address health concerns within Montgomery County.

Rosemary Payne

Rosemary is a federal government employee with more than seven years of federal service between two agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services. She has seventeen years of nursing leadership within both federal and civilian healthcare enterprises. She has nursing leadership and public health experience in biomedical research, mental health and addictions, HIV/AIDS, correctional health, and emergency medicine and parish nursing. She was a past member of the American Psychiatric Nursing Association. Rosemary is a Registered Nurse with a Master of Science in Nursing from Morgan State University.

Fabienne Santel

Fabienne is a physician, medical writer and clinical research consultant. She received her BA from the University of Maryland at College Park, her Masters of Public Health from Florida A&M University and her MD degree from the SUNY Downstate College of Medicine in Brooklyn, New York. She is board certified in internal medicine and has practiced as a hospitalist, a primary care physician and volunteer provider in Montgomery County.

Commission on Health Priorities

At the Commission on Health Annual Retreat held on September 17, 2020, the Commission on Health set four priorities for FY21.

- Communicable Disease
- School Health
- Public Health Data and Modernization
- Racial Equity



Photo: Commission on Health Annual Retreat held on September 17, 2020

Commission Correspondence

The Commission on Health sent the following letters during Fiscal Year 2021:

- Letter to the County Executive in support of the County's data-based response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, July 2020 (Appendix A)
- Letter to the County Executive and County Council with recommendations on equitable vaccine distribution, January 2021 (Appendix B)
- Letter of gratitude to Montgomery County DHHS staff during National Public Health Week, March 2021. (Appendix C)
- Letter to the County Executive in support of the County's continued COVID-19 restrictions, April 2021. (Appendix D)

Commission on Health Testimonies

The Commission on Health testified at the following forums:

- Presentation to the County Council sitting as the Board of Health on November 10, 2020.
- County Council HHS Committee Work Session for HHS Boards, Committees and Commissions on November 18, 2020.
- BCC Chairs meeting with HHS Director Raymond Crowel on June 28, 2021, to discuss COH priorities and ongoing operations.

Commission on Health Liaisons

Board, Committee or Commission	Liaison
African American Health Program (AAHP)	Crystal DeVance -Wilson
Board of Social Services	Chris Burt
Commission on Children Youth and Families	Jonathan Arias
Commission on Veterans Affairs	Rosemary Payne
Healthy Montgomery Steering Committee	Crystal DeVance -Wilson
Latino Health Initiative (LHI)	Marcela Campoli
Mental Health Advisory Board	Jess Kronstadt
Montgomery Cares Advisory Board (MCAB)	Sarah Emami

Commission on Health Committees

Membership Committee

Brittne Jackson
Elliott Brown

Nominating Committee

Marcela Campoli
Desiree de la Torre

Retreat Planning Committee

Jessica Kronstadt
Christopher Burt
Desiree de la Torre

Commission on Health Workgroups

Communicable Disease

Brent Berger (Chair), Sarah Emami, Rosemary Payne, and Fabienne Santel.

Governance

Jessica Kronstadt (Chair), and Desiree de la Torre.

Public Health Data and Modernization

Terri McGuire (Chair), Jessica Kronstadt, and Jelani Murrain.

Racial Equity

Brittne Jackson (Chair), Chris Burt, Marcela Campoli, Amy Gyau-Moyer, and Nadia Hashimi.

School Health

Alana Aronin (Chair), Jonathan Arias, Elliott Brown, Marla Caplon, Crystal DeVance-Wilson, and Kendra Harris.

Commission on Health Workgroups Summary Reports

Communicable Disease

The Communicable Disease workgroup sought collaboration with other COH work groups, primarily School Health, looking for areas of mutual interest to help prevent communicable diseases. The specific area of interest identified was improving immunization rates by spreading awareness on vaccines, supporting initiatives to address vaccine hesitancy and encouraging utilization of mobile vaccination vans. In January members of the two workgroups spearheaded a letter to the County Executive and County Council with recommendations on equitable vaccine distribution.

The pandemic has reinforced the existence of health disparities in Montgomery County, and while all can benefit from routine immunizations, reducing cultural, language, and other barriers to recommended vaccinations is essential to promote equity. The workgroup also penned a letter to the County Executive in support of the County's continued COVID-19 restrictions.

The workgroup also investigated gaps in health services for HIV, TB and STI prevention. They met with individuals within the County to gain an understanding of resources, funding and staffing currently available. As the focus turns away from COVID-19 in FY22, they hope to learn more about the health needs and service gaps related to these communicable diseases. They will continue to encourage focus on science-based approaches to preventing communicable diseases, with particular attention on HIV, TB and STI prevention.

Commission on Health Workgroups Summary Reports (Cont.)

Governance

The Governance Workgroup was formed in January 2020 to strengthen the operations of the COH. During the past year, the workgroup's efforts were informed by a survey of new members. This informed changes to information that was shared during the orientation of new COH members, as well as to updates on the website and the Microsoft Teams site. In addition, the Workgroup developed a guidance document on establishing and managing COH workgroup priorities.

To better understand the needs of COH members and to support succession planning for Commission leadership, the workgroup also conducted one-on-one discussions with each Commissioner. These discussions yielded suggestions related to bolstering the toolbox that workgroups can use to effect change, as well as to identifying more opportunities for Commissioners to get to know each other.

Public Health Data and Modernization

The Public Health Data and Modernization was formed in November 2020 to strengthen data collection, analysis, and dissemination. The workgroup has explored topics related to Healthy Montgomery metrics, reports on health equity and other county data, and staff needs and capacity. Through discussion with several members of DHHS' Planning and Epidemiology team, the workgroup identified the need for greater department staffing capacity to compile and track administrative and clinical data from the Healthcare for the Uninsured program.

In the next fiscal year, the workgroup will coordinate with the Montgomery Cares Advisory Board on a specific request related to this critical need. In addition, the workgroup will review forthcoming recommendations from the National Commission to Transform Public Health Data Systems and endorse specific recommendations relevant to DHHS.

Racial Equity

The racial equity workgroup was established during the in November of 2020 with the goal of promoting equitable access to health services within the County. Their goals were to support vaccine education, ensure access to COVID-vaccine and improve testing in high risk and marginalized communities.

The workgroup sought collaboration from both the School Health and Communicable disease workgroup to align efforts. The workgroup investigated ways to ensure a safe return to school for students. They also researched potential barriers that prohibited students returning to school due to equity.

Commission on Health Workgroups Summary Reports

School Health

Following an active year with the School Health Workgroup where County Council advocacy helped secure additional funding for School Health Nurses to better meet the needs of Montgomery County Public Schools students. This fiscal year focused on oversight and raising awareness for school health needs following the Covid-19 Pandemic school closures.

The School Health Workgroup hosted Joan Glick of the DHHS School Health Services division at the October general Commission on Health meeting, to hear an update on school health services, personnel, and plans for possible reopening of school health centers, clinics, and health rooms when allowed. While schools remain closed, almost all School Health staff have been reassigned for a large portion of their time to cover other public health department needs. Certain portions of the staff time remain allocated to school health needs, including follow-up for enrolling families needing to update vaccines. The Commission was assured that when schools are allowed to reopen, school health staff will be able to return to their school assignments. Attainment of adequate PPE, safety measures, and other planning information was shared, and DHHS is working hard to assure high levels of safety can be assured when schools are allowed to reopen.

The School Health Workgroup engaged in conversation for the remainder of the year around 3 major issues: assuring the safety of students and staff when schools are allowed to reopen; considering ways schools can play a role in reversing the downward vaccine rates, as a result of Covid-19; and begin to consider the important role schools play in children's mental health.

Montgomery County Commission on Health

Commission on Health
1401 Rockville Pike
2nd Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/PHS/CommOnHealth/COHIndex.html>



The Commission on Health was established on July 1, 1988. See chapter 23-24 of the Montgomery County Code for a description of the mission of the Commission on Health.



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Raymond L. Crowel
Director

The County Executive and County Council encourage people who live or work in Montgomery County to become actively involved in matters affecting the quality of life in Montgomery County. Appointments are made to over 75 Boards, Committees, and Commissions by the County Executive, with confirmation by the County Council.

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/boards/index.html>