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## Public Health + Safety Meeting #9

February 1, 2022, 6:00PM | 2 hours

*Documented by: Karen Viado*

### ATTENDEES

- Romina Castillo
- Wesley Eplin
- Francine Dillard
- Stephanie Dunn
- Suzanne Carlberg-Racich
- Brianna Lawrence
- Elias Kassa
- Kate McMahon
- Todd Wyatt
- Alex Meixner
- Katelyn Johnson
- Sheri Cohen
- Sophie Chishty
- Victoria Barrett
- Chloe Gurin-Sands



#### MEETING GOAL

*Develop 3-5 policies for each objective of the first two guiding questions.*

#### WHERE WE ARE



Step 1

**We Are**

*Setting the Stage*



Step 2

**We Have and Need**

*Develop A Policy Toolkit*



Step 3

**We Will**

*Set Policy Framework*

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

Suzanne Carlberg-Racich gave a presentation on harm reduction policy recommendations addressing the opioid epidemic in Chicago. These recommendations included using people-first language in all City communications and creating overdose prevention sites.

2

An important theme for policy is to ensure equitable and affordable healthcare services to address pharmacy deserts and increase school-based health services. Schools and community hubs are places that families and residents regularly go to, so providing services there would reach more community members.

3

Another recurring theme for ensuring equitable healthcare services is to increase the number of Black and Brown healthcare professionals. Policy ideas included funding and creating programs that will help Black and Brown youth and emerging adults enter the healthcare industry.

CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS

*“Harm reduction is accepting people right where they are, but not leaving them there.”*

**Suzanne Carlberg-Racich** | DePaul University School of Public Health, Associate Professor

*“All policy is health policy.”*

**Kate McMahon** | Chicago Department of Public Health, Director of Office of Health Equity in All Policies

*“If we’re trying to increase equitable, affordable services without having a giant price tag come to the City, helping folks sign up for state and federal services would be a good place to start.”*

**Alex Meixner** | American Heart Association, Regional Vice President of Advocacy

*“Give the people who are already operating these spaces the resources to continue their services and potentially expand out more to the community [on school-based health centers].”*

**Brianna Lawrence** | Coalition on Urban Girls, Executive Director

## NOTES

- Romina Castillo facilitated the meeting. She also shared a communications update. Based on feedback from the public, the City of Chicago is working on making the language in communications – specifically the guiding questions for each pillar – clearer to make them more accessible.
- Wesley Eplin introduced Suzanne Carlberg-Racich, an associate professor at the School of Public Health at DePaul University, who gave a presentation on harm reduction policy recommendations.
  - Harm reduction is recognizing any and all healthy options someone can take.
  - Reducing stigma and other agents of harm are important for harm reduction. A policy recommendation included adopting and promoting person-first language in all city communication.
- Eplin shared that the goals of the meeting are to brainstorm 3-5 policies per objective for the pillar's first two guiding questions.
  - Eplin said that a good policy identifies the policy lever and includes a measurable action.
  - City policy levers are the actions the City can do. They include funding and direct provision, rules and regulations, research and exploration, and information and support.
- Each breakout group was given access to a working document on Google Docs, which listed each objective for the guiding question the group was working on. It listed innovative policies from other cities and relevant policies from past City plans. It also listed policies brainstormed in previous discussions. It also included questions for team members to consider and answer for each objective:
  - Which policies resonate with you?
  - How can we use the policy toolkit to improve or add to these policies? What can we keep, delete, edit, or refine to make more Chicago-centric?
  - What is missing from this list?
- Breakout Group 1 discussed policy ideas for Guiding Question #1: How can we ensure equitable and affordable healthcare services for all Chicagoans?
  - Objective 1: Ensure access to affordable high-quality physical and behavioral health services. Policy ideas included:
    - Improving Medicaid reimbursements for behavioral and oral health.
    - Passing HB4437 for Medicaid coverage for immigrant adults ages 19-64.
    - Addressing drugstore pharmacy deserts by potentially funding a mobile pharmacy.

- Objective 2: Increase accessibility, funding, and quality of community health resources. Policy ideas included:
  - Using community hubs and schools to provide services.
  - Creating a program to make Community Health Worker training and certification more available and affordable.
- Brianna Lawrence said that one suggestion that came up in a community meeting was providing daily bus routes that have stops at local schools and community healthcare providers. Katelyn Johnson shared another suggestion from a community meeting about covering the gap in Medicaid prescription coverage.
- The group did not have time to address Objective 3 (Make physical and mental health trauma-informed and culturally responsive) and Objective 4 (Support Black and Brown Chicagoans' health career pursuits and successes).
- Breakout Group 2 discussed policy ideas for Guiding Question #2: How can we ensure equitable accessibility and safe freedom of movement with opportunities that promote optimal health and well-being for all Chicagoans? They also were only able to brainstorm policy ideas for the first two objectives of this guiding question.
- After the breakout sessions, the team reconvened. They did not share ideas and discussions from their breakout sessions. The next meetings will be similar to this one. They asked for feedback about the policy breakout session structure. Victoria Barrett said that she appreciated having speakers give presentations.

**RESOURCES**

**CHICAGO RECOVERY ALLIANCE**

[Website](#)

**ILLINOIS HOUSE BILL 4437**

[Proposed state legislation that would empower the Department of Healthcare and Family Services to provide medical care to low-income noncitizens](#)

**COALITION ON URBAN GIRLS**

[Website](#)

#### NEXT STEPS

- Facilitators plan to refine and record comments and ideas shared in breakout sessions.
- The next pillar team meeting is on Tuesday, February 22, 2022.