

KENT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Thursday, February 14, 2002
TASK FORCE ON HEALTH CARE FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR
REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
WORK SESSION
Administration Building - Room 310

Meeting called to order at 7:45 a.m. by Chair Steven R. Heacock.

Present: Commissioners Boelema, Buege, Hiddema, Horton, Koorndyk, Kuhn, Kuipers, Mayhue, McGuire, Morgan, Morren, Postmus, Sak, Smoke, Vaughn, Vonk, Wahlfield, Chair Heacock - 18.

Absent: Mast – 1 (Excused).

INTRODUCTION

(A copy of the Health Care for People of Color Report and Recommendations, which was distributed to Commissioners, is on file in the Office of the County Clerk.)

The Task Force on Health Care for People of Color was established in June, 2001, by Chair Heacock and its mission and charge was:

To examine the issue of health care for people of color, determine what the County is doing to resolve existing barriers, and to develop proposals for County action.

Individuals who participated in Task Force meetings include:

Nora Barkey	Paul Doyle	Pat Mathis	Chris Shea
Lou Barnes III	Beverly Drake	Walter Mathis, Sr.	Maureen Street, M.D.
Tina Barnikow	Margo Duncan M.D.	Whitney Mauer	Barbara Terry
Wanda Bierman	Lennox Forrest	Virginia Morales	Carol VanderWal
Tim Bolen	Barbara Hawkins-Palmer	Khan Nedd, M.D.	Sandy Walls
Julie Bonewell	Debra Holmes-Garrison	Jackie O'Conner	Terri Weekley
Walter Brame	Bonnie Huntley	Roberta Peacock	James Williamson
LaDeidra Brown-Gais	Jesus Jaime	Penny Pestle	Chuck Zech
Rhondo Cooper	Anthony King	Cathy Raevsky	Lody Zwarensteyn
Teresa Cruz	Ruth Lumpkins	Shirley Rapier	Andrew Zylstra
Frances Dalton	Frank Lynn	Khalil Rashid	
Mary Dengerink	Bradford Mathis	Almira Rojas-Barker	

Task Force members involved in the work session include Tim Bolen, Brad Mathis, Beverly Drake, and Cathy Raevsky.

Tim Bolen reviewed some of the data that the Task Force considered which consisted of:

1. Census data
2. Infant death rates
3. African-American infant deaths by county
4. Low birthrate/prenatal care by race/ethnicity;
5. Heart disease by age, and
6. Cancer by age

Brad Mathis related anecdotes behind the statistics and set forth the five categories of barriers.

Beverly Drake reviewed the recommendations and what Kent County can do to implement the recommendations.

Mary Swanson discussed how the County should handle the recommendations.

Cathy Raevsky discussed the resources needed to implement the recommendations.

And finally, Mary Swanson concluded that the Task Force would direct County staff to oversee the recommendations which would result in fewer barriers, increased access and improved health.

The Task Force's findings and recommendations are listed below.

FINDINGS

The Task Force met during June & July 2001, where it listened to presentations and reviewed data relative to disparity in health outcomes for people of color in the community.

Another meeting was devoted to "brainstorming" on barriers and ideas on how to address them.

A smaller committee convened to develop draft recommendations.

Barriers and ways to address them were separated into five broad categories:

- 1) Access to Health Services
- 2) Cultural Sensitivity and Healing Racism
- 3) Education and Information
- 4) Prevention
- 5) Policy

A series of specific recommendations targeting each of the categories was developed, and brought back to the larger group for review and revision.

As recommendations were developed and discussed, it was repeatedly noted that other community groups, healthcare providers, and managed care organizations are already working on initiatives with similar goals.

The Task Force participants emphasized that the County should use its resources to supply or supplement the efforts of others, rather than to create new or duplicative structures.

The Task Force encouraged the County to develop evaluation measures for each of the recommendations.

The Task Force stressed that the County should assign the responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations Related to Access:

Challenge the clinics (public and private) to collectively address the various health care system improvement projects identified by the Task Force and provide a dedicated, system-neutral, professional-level person and required, associated report.

Design, develop and implement a Health Care Transportation Resource Directory and Coordination Project.

Support community efforts to establish health care coverage for low-income people.

Recommendations related to Cultural Sensitivity and Healing Racism:

Develop an educational tool specifically for medical personnel, and create a vehicle to disseminate it and engage participation.

Recommendations related to Education and Information:

Work with First Call for Help/211 to include preventive and primary health care information within its Information and Referral Program.

Recommendations related to Prevention:

Design, develop and implement a public information campaign focusing on education about minority health, prevention promotion, and access issues.

Recommendations related to Policy:

Assign ownership/follow up on Task Force recommendations and issues to an individual who will have the responsibility as a priority of their job description, not as an add-on.

These recommendations will go through the standing committee process and, if approved, to the Board of Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:30 a.m., the Work Session was adjourned.

Steven R. Heacock, Chair

Mary Hollinrake, County Clerk