

# Multicultural Advisory Committee of the State of Utah's COVID-19 Response

## Meeting Minutes

Friday, February 12, 2021 | 3:00 - 4:00 P.M.

Google Meet | Online

**Members:** Chair Nubia Peña, Co-Chair Byron Russell, Co-Chair Ze Min Xiao, Aden Batar, Juan Becerra, Mayra Cedano, Dulce Díez, Jake Fitisemanu Jr., Emma E. Houston, Dr. Len Novilla, Ming Wang

**Absent:** Jess Anderson, Dr. Marc Babitz, Silvia Castro, Neelam Chand, Rebecca Chavez-Houck, Dustin Jansen, Deneiva Knight, Mikelle Moore, Asha Parekh

**Guests:** Ramy Ahmed, Ciriac Alvarez Valle, Dr. Joél Arvizo-Zavala, Luna Banuri, Rozanna Benally-Sagg José Borjón, Heather Borski, Ginette Bott, Mayra Cardozo, Maegan Castleton, Brittney Cummins, RyLee Curtis, Anna Gallegos, Tina Groves, Jenny Hor, Claudia Loayza, Hilary Makris, Nate McDonald, Angelo Papastamos, Katherine Potter, Jeremy Taylor, Taysha Tiatia, Oreta Tupola, Jeannette Villalta, Megan Waters, Nicholina Womack, Marti Woolford, James Yapias

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### Welcome – Byron Russell, Co-Chair

Byron Russell welcomed attendees to the meeting.

### Communications – Juan Becerra

- Vaccination messaging effort: The objective is providing timely and accurate information, and mitigating misinformation about the COVID-19 vaccine.
  - Vaccination Messaging
    - Working with public information officers (PIO) to produce educational materials addressing unique community concerns
    - Producing materials with trusted voices of the community (i.e., interfaith, medical professionals, etc.)
    - Highlighting vaccine efforts of counties and communities throughout Utah
    - Coordinating production and media outreach via town halls, webinars, radio programs, etc.
  - COVID-19 Media Coordination
    - Meeting with joint communications team and PIO groups to share information
    - Hosting weekly interviews on Spanish radio and TV forums on specific topics relating to the vaccine and some days hosting medical professionals for the Spanish-speaking demographic
    - Continued meetings with Penna Powers with the goal of increasing social media engagements
  - Statewide PIO Training and Best Practices
    - Partner with Language Access workgroup in distributing survey to communication professionals
    - Survey for “lessons learned” over the course of the pandemic to develop equitable communication practice guides
    - Coordinate training and speaking engagements with the statewide PIO chapter
- Question: Request from the Mexican Consulate to receive vaccination for four specific essential workers due to their interactions within the community
  - Dulce Díez: The guidelines currently state that priority goes to healthcare workers, and providers. Other front-line essential workers are in mind but the health department is not in charge of deciding who gets the vaccine. More vaccines will be delivered March 1st. Making exceptions right now is not possible.
- Question: Is there a way to recognize tribal community partners?
  - Jeremy Taylor has some initial contacts he meets with every Wednesday. They would appreciate the recognition.

### Community Health Worker Updates – Oreta Tupola & Jeannette Villalta

- CHW Landscape in Utah
    - Government: Multicultural Affairs, government officials
    - State: Utah Department of Health, county health departments, local health departments
    - Local: Community-based organizations, Utah Public Health Association CHW section, University of Utah, Association for Utah Community Health, and Native American community health representatives
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- CHWs reach from Logan to rural areas and reservations. Due to COVID-19, a registry of CHWs has been developed, which increases the reach beyond Salt Lake City.
- Community report: Giving Community Voice
  - CHW meetings are open, and any information on resources to be shared is always appreciated.
  - With misinformation in the community, Facebook Live sessions are helpful in dispelling myths.
  - Areas of community and CHW concerns
    - Vaccine questions, fears, and myths (i.e., historical fears, getting more sick, etc.)
    - Stress in the senior populations, and access to vaccines
    - Eligibility and registration process—many do not finish their registration due to confusion, or frustration and many do not check their phones/links due to technology disparities
    - Access to resources such as housing, loss of employment, mental health, schooling, ability to quarantine, etc.
    - Underlying disease, and waiting for their vaccination
    - Ze Min Xiao has clarified that clinics are targeting specific demographics, but are not turning away people so long as they fit the 70+ age requirement.
    - CHWs need to be aware of resources, and vaccination sites so they can better guide the community, which will help with registration as well
      - Ducle Díez: Currently in the process of mapping all the vaccination sites, and working with health departments to create mobile sites that target high risk areas along with adding over the phone and walk-in registrations.
      - Need data of people checking their race and ethnicity boxes during registration
- CHW Accomplishments
  - Funding has continued
  - Awareness of CHWs has increased, which expands opportunities for community voices
  - Increased action, advocacy, and support in addressing inequities and racism
  - Inclusion of CHWs on decisions that impact the communities they serve
  - Increased trust with communities, and members of government from a local to statewide level
- Nubia Peña: Do communities still struggle with having access to food, and food pantries?
  - CHWs work with food pantries and other resources to share information with communities, including access to culturally varied food.
  - The barrier is awareness. Although it has improved, there is still a need in making sure communities know these resources exist.
  - CHWs coordinate food boxes, and there is a wide capacity to deliver more of them as well.
- Jame Yapias: In the month of March, the Glendale Community Learning Center and Rose Park Community Learning Center are offering vaccinations and currently looking for partners to help address the gaps, and make the process as effective as possible. The centers are working with mobile units, and the county.

## Department of Workforce Services Updates – Nate McDonald

- Emergency Rental Assistance Program
  - New federal program passed at the start of the year to help with the rest of 2021. The state of Utah was approved for the money with some initial guidance in how to implement, but still only have a basic understanding of the guidelines. DWS used leftover funding to help cover January and February until additional guidance was given.
  - DWS still accepted applications during the previous months and developed a new application process to better meet the guidelines. States were put on hold due to the change in leadership.
  - DWS is eager to get guidance and move forward in March.
- Unemployment insurance, and other programs
  - In December, the unemployment rate was 3.6 percent, putting Utah fifth in the U.S. in terms of unemployment.
  - Programs include: Traditional benefits, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, and Extended Benefits, which is a new program offered.
  - Traditional benefits climbed up around 6.7 percent while the other benefits dropped.

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- Highest application rate was from March-April with a steady plateau for the rest of 2020 and an increase in January due to renewed and extended programs.
- Additional assistance programs include food stamps, child care, SNAP, and Medicaid. DWS ended the year with 23,000 applicants. This is nearly a 10,000 increase from last year, with November being the peak.
- All employment centers are open with safety procedures.
- Mayra Cedano: If Pandemic EBT is approved what is the expected start date?
  - Tentative start date is in April. Second round of funding is not an application process but will depend on the data from the school systems, which should help streamline the process.

## **Other Business**

- Next meeting will be held February 26th, 2021 due to the shortened week.
- **Happy Lunar New Year!**

## **Next Meeting**

Friday, February 26, 2021 from 3:00–4:00 P.M. through Google Meet.