

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
Department of Health Care Finance



**Perinatal Mental Health Task Force**

Tuesday, February 28, 2023 | 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

**Meeting Minutes**

**MEMBERS:**

<b>Aimee Danielson, PhD, Non-Government Co-Chair</b>	Lenore Jarvis
Amena Hamilton	<del>Leslie Brettschneider, LICSW</del>
Andrea Agalloco, MSW, LICSW	Maariya Bassa
Anna Koozmin, MSW, LICSW	<b>Nandi Bartons, Non- Government Co-Chair</b>
Annette Lee, MSN, RN	<del>NaToya Mitchell</del>
Bryan Harrison	<del>Ona Balkus</del>
Fari Ghamina Tumpe	<b>Melisa Byrd, Government Co-Chair</b>
Jasmine Bihm, DrPH, MPH	Raymond Tu, MD, MS, FACR
Jenny Mancino	<del>Sydney Wilson</del>
Katie Whitehouse	Wanda Wilson
Lauren Demosthenes	

**GUESTS**

Alana Aronin	Jacque Cole
Ashley Young	Jennifer Joyce
Austyn Holleman	Kathryn Yanik
Aza Nedhari, CPM, LGPC	K'Yalei Harris
Catina Hancock	Leah Castelaz
Colleen Sonosky	Lyles Smith
Crystal Bell	Mark Fracasso
Crystal Jackson	Rosy Chacon
Dakota Staren	Shanita Douglas
Dee Williams	Susan Muchemi
DeJa Love	Tracy Vozar
Ekaterina Christopherson	Victoria Roberts
Eleni Salyers	Yolanda Hightower
Felecia Stovall	Zavi Brees-Saunders

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 4:06pm by Melisa Byrd, Senior Deputy Director and Medicaid Director at the Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF).

## **II. Observations of Individuals with Lived Experiences**

Nandi Barton shared her postpartum experience and other encountered challenges. She emphasized the importance of Doula services.

## **III. Perinatal Mental Health Primer**

Aimee Danielson, Director and Therapist, Women's Mental Health at the MedStar Georgetown University Hospital and MedStar Washington Hospital Center, provided an overview of perinatal mental health ([see pages 1-29 of the presentation](#)). Dr. Danielson accentuated the significance of reproductive psychiatry training for OBGYNs.

- At the next meeting, the group will discuss available programs and resources in and outside the District.

## **IV. Overview and Discussion of Proposed Subcommittees**

Melisa Byrd announced that The Perinatal Mental Task Force will be broken down into five subcommittees. Each subcommittee will focus on specific topics.

DaShawn Groves, Special Project Officer at DHCF, provided an overview of proposed subcommittees, solicited feedback on the structure and called for volunteers to lead discussions for subcommittees ([see pages 30-32 of the presentation](#)).

### **Navigation and Access Subcommittees**

**Comment:** Andrea Agalloco from Mary's Center noted that the following question feels uncomfortable "What strategies can be used to build trust?". The committee needs to think more about what building trust looks like. It is being trustworthy and working on eradicating bias and providing better care. Please clarify what this is and what are the stressors and/or triggers.

**Response:** DaShawn noted that questions are created for members to think about what should be accomplished under each subcommittee. Subcommittees will set their own agenda, change the wording of questions if necessary and decide what questions they need to address. Please let DaShawn know if there is something you are passionate about that has not been addressed in one of these subcommittees and he will bring it to co-chairs.

Melisa Byrd asked the group to confirm whether the five proposed subcommittees make sense and cover broadly the right topics. Please share your thoughts or additional questions that you would like to see addressed by a subcommittee. The subcommittee itself, once it comes together, will establish the purpose and the questions to be addressed through the work.

**Next Steps:** The group will review the information on proposed subcommittees and send suggested edits or questions to [DaShawn.Groves@dc.gov](mailto:DaShawn.Groves@dc.gov) by Friday, March 3, 2023.

## **V. Other Announcements and Public Comments**

### **Task Force Cadence**

The majority of task force members voted to keep monthly cadence from 4pm to 6pm.

- **Follow-up:** DaShawn Groves will update the calendar invites.
- DaShawn noted that subcommittees meetings will be separate from the monthly Perinatal Mental Health Task Force meeting.
- The next meeting is on March 28, 2023.

**Question 1.**

Felecia Stovall asked if the communication with provider and community would falls under the public awareness or the system capacity building?

**Answer 1.**

- DaShawn Groves responded that it is up to the task force members to decide.

**Comment 1.**

DeJa Love, the CEO of the Black Women's Wellness Agency, Inc., raised awareness of the disparities that Black birthing population encounter. She hopes the task force moves beyond having a "Lived Experience Expert" to co-creating/co-designing policy and programs (in partnership with lived experience) that truly have a community-cased participatory methodology. Ms. Love invited the task force to recenter how the data is presented. Instead of presenting the data as an issue the target population has, provide a root cause analysis as a primer on the structural issues that create the vast disparities.

**Question 2:**

DeJa Love asked how can we train medical providers to be aware of their bias, which leads to disparities/differences in care for the Black birthing population?

**Answer 2:**

Aimee Danielson responded that we need to make sure it is specifically listed as a question for the appropriate committee.

**Comment 2.**

Nandi noted that DCPCA has an implicit bias training that is facilitated and created by black mothers that experienced bias in the household. Nandi is a part of that context team.

**Comment 3.**

DeJa Love noted that there is a need to be a larger incentive for Providers to be anti-racist in their clinical practice, which is why the Maternal Mortality Crisis continues to expand each year.

**Comment 4.**

DeJa Love suggested the more inclusive term "Birthing Person" should be adopted.

**Comment 2.**

Nandi believes it also goes under the radar and suggested doing No Harm check list that she believes providers should highlight across the board. Ebony did an amazing job identifying the needs within that checklist.

**VI. Adjournment**