

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Department of Health Care Finance



Perinatal Mental Health Task Force

Tuesday, January 31, 2023 | 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Meeting Minutes

Attendees

Aimee Danielson	DeJa Love	Micheal McGee
Alana Aronin	Eleni Salyers	Nandi Bartons
Amena Hamilton	Faythe Edmunds	NaToya Mitchell
Andrea Agalloco	Gayle Hurt	Ona Balkus
Anna Koozmin	Jasmine Bihm	Raymond Tu
Annette Lee MSN, RN	Jenny Mancino	Sarah Barclay Hoffman
Austyn Holleman	Katie Whitehouse	Susan Muchemi
Brittini King	K'Yalei Harris	Sydney Wilson
Bryan Harrison	Lauren Demosthenes	Tracy Vozar
Bryan Hum	Lawryn Fowler	U'nek Clarke
Carol Chace	Leah Castelaz	Wanda Wilson
Colleen Sonosky	Leslie Brettschneider	Yavar Moghimi
Crystal Jackson	Leslie Lyles Smith	Zavi Brees-Saunders
Dakota Staren	Melisa Byrd	

I. Welcome and Overview

Melisa Byrd, Senior Deputy Director and Medicaid Director at the Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF), who is also serving as the government co-chair of the Perinatal Mental Health Task Force called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

Today's focus:

- Organize the task force
- Set a baseline of information on the District's mental health programs

Today's goal:

- Get to know each other
- Set the work expectations for the next several months
- Identify the non-government co-chair and the cadence of the meetings

- Develop an understanding of the current District Perinatal Mental Health Programs

Melisa Byrd presented on the DHCF's stakeholder approach to advance maternal health, the purpose of the task force and the milestones ([Link to the presentation](#), pages 4-7).

Please send any ideas on how to structure the sub-committee to DaShawn Groves, Special Project Officer at DHCF, at dashawn.groves@dc.gov.

II. Roundtable Discussion on Task Force Outcomes

Members introduced themselves and shared with a group why they joined the task force and what they hope to accomplish.

- Melisa Byrd shared that this is both personal and professional to her. She wants to make sure that resources and services are available to District residents to help them with the major life transition of becoming a parent in a way that meets their hopes and goals.
- Katie Whitehouse is a staff member for the Councilmember (CM) Robert White. CM White is a chair of the Committee on Housing, which has jurisdiction over the Department of Human Services (DHS). Ms. Whitehouse has experience in early childhood education.
- Lauren Demosthenes is OBGYN/Senior Medical Director of Babyscripts, a digital maternal health care company. She is personally familiar with screening issues in perinatal mental health. Ms. Demosthenes also teaches about substance use disorder at a medical school which overlaps with mental health. She joined the group with the hope that the task force team can be creative and use some digital tools in helping women to access help and improve the screening for anxiety and depression. Her focus is on the first prenatal visit, throughout pregnancy, and postpartum care.
- Jasmine Bihm is the Division Chief, Perinatal and Infant Health at DC Health. She is also a member by virtue of being a representative of DC Health. Ms. Bihm joined the task force to discuss feasible, actionable and systems-level recommendations.
- Aimee Danielson is a Clinical Psychologist at the Department of Psychiatry, MedStar, Georgetown. She also works with a program for mothers at the Washington Hospital Center. Dr. Danielson hopes to contribute toward increasing the screening access to care and additional supports and services. Dr. Danielson hopes this task force will serve to expand the options and resources for psychiatric care in the District for women with severe psychiatric illnesses.
- Raymond Tu is a Senior Medical Director and Chief Medical Officer at the MedStar Family Choice-DC Health Plan. He is passionate about Medicaid and health care. Dr. Tu, a native Washingtonian, started his career at the United Medical Center. When he was the Chief Medical Officer, he was emboldened by the need for

District residents to get excellent perinatal and post-delivery care. He believes it is critical that everyone works together to achieve great health outcomes.

- NaToya Mitchell is an advocate and a health care partner for children, women, and families in the Washington Metropolitan Area. She looks forward to engaging in discussion as the group looks at various partners and different policies to ensure that policy recommendations will benefit patients overall.
- Micheal McGee is representing Healthy DC & Me. He is a student at Bowie State University and researching the fetal psychological development as it correlates with the mother's stressful environment. In addition, Mr. McGee is considering pursuing his doctoral program on the neuro psychology, looking at how the hormones affects the baby psychological development. This is personal to him.
- Amena Hamilton is the EPSDT Program Manager at AmeriHealth Caritas and the Vice President of the DC Breastfeeding Coalition. She hopes to see the perinatal program development and transitioning it into postpartum.
- Andrea Agalloco is a social worker at Mary's Center where she oversees the perinatal mental health program. She hopes to focus on gaps in care, especially for the underserved population, and make sure they have a culturally relevant care available. In addition, Ms. Agalloco hopes to come up with policy recommendations around the workforce development for behavioral health, as well as prevention and home visiting, and continue to build upon those models to support the perinatal population with services that do not necessarily need behavioral health to be provided.
- Annette Lee has been with the mental health population for over 20 years. She specializes in geriatrics and children. She would like to learn more about the population with the Perinatal Mental Health issues and come up with the recommendations that can help meet their needs.
- Wanda Wilson is a clinical social worker with the DC Department of Behavior Health (DBH). She is assigned to Parent Infant Early Childhood Enhancement Program (PIECE). They provide services for young children and have a small group of women who are living with pre- and post-natal depression. Prenatal mental health has always been her passion. Ms. Wilson wants to learn more about how to reach that population of women.
- Anna Koozmin is a licensed clinical social worker at the Children's National Hospital. She has been a part of the founding group working on universal screening for the postpartum mental health in the emergency room and in neonatal intensive care unit. In addition, she is part of the group of programs that is funded by the Clark Parent-Child Health Initiative to further strengthen the network of programs provided for caregivers and infants in the District. She hopes to brainstorm solutions on how to work less in silos but better connect caregivers to the ongoing support once they are discharged from the hospital and with the providers in the community.

- Bryan Harrison is a Policy Director, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services. He hopes to help increase awareness, build out utilization and services, and come up with recommendations.
- Nandi Barton is here to be a voice to all black mothers who are not heard, misunderstood or experience anxieties. She hopes this team and the city council can make a change that will create a nurturing environment for mothers and their children to thrive.
- Leslie Brettschneider is the Director of Integrated Emotional Wellness at the Community of Hope. She has some clinical time and also oversees all integration programs, including emotional wellness integration into maternal and child health and midwifery programs. Ms. Brettschneider hopes to work on non-white and non-clinical interventions to strengthen perinatal health overall.
- Jenny Mancino is a home visiting program manager at Mary's Center with social work background. She worked with the perinatal population in a variety of settings. Ms. Mancino hopes this task force can help DC families to easily navigate care and mental health support. She looks forward to the policy recommendations.
- Ona Balkus is the new Committee Director for the Committee on Health. She looks forward to the policy recommendations and leaning from the group.
- Sydney Wilson is a social worker and the Director of programs at Mamatoto Village. She hopes the group can come up with viable perinatal mental health policy recommendations, including screening for all parents. She raised the issue of perinatal mental health accessibility.
- Lenore Jarvis had to step away to work at the emergency room.

Melisa Byrd stressed the importance of getting to know each other and identified a few **key areas**:

- Screening access/service
- Workforce

III. Nomination and Election of Non-Government Co-Chair

Melisa Byrd provided the anticipated duties for the Non-Government Co-Chair:

- Monthly touch base on agenda and overall directions, make sure we have resources available to support that, and talk through how the group is progressing.
- Provide guidance to the pathway for task force's work going forward
- Make sure that group will stay on task and meet the requirements of the deliverables through the legislation
- Some participation on the subcommittees
- Lead the group to the end point of having the comprehensive report/recommendations

DaShawn Groves, Special Project Officer is responsible for staffing the task force. Along with Kate Christopherson, Executive Assistant, he will create agendas and do some logistical work.

Self-Nominees:

- Nandi Bartons
- Aimee Danielson

The task force members agreed to have both, Nandi Bartons and Aimee Danielson, serve as Co-Chairs as it will bring the community and clinical perspectives.

IV. Current State of Perinatal Mental Health Programs

- **DC Health**

Jasmine Bihm, the Division Chief, Perinatal & Infant Health at DC Health, presented on the perinatal and infant health framework, Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) - postpartum health, selected DC Health perinatal and maternal health programs and future efforts and areas of opportunity ([Link to the presentation](#), pages 10-23)

- **Department of Behavioral Health**

Wanda Wilson, a clinical social worker with the DC Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), provided an overview of the Parent Infant Early Childhood Enhancement Program (PIECE).

- Please e-mail Ms. Wilson at wanda.wilson@dc.gov if you are interested in obtaining the slides
- If someone is interested in learning more about the maternal health programs, please contact Ms. Wilson by phone at 202-698-2386

V. Other Announcements and Public Comments

- Proposed meeting schedule: The last Tuesday of the month @ 4 pm.
 - Lauren Demosthenes moved forward the motion to set the meeting cadence for the last Tuesday of the month at 4 pm
 - Amena Hamilton seconded it in favor
 - No objections
- Doula Representative
 - Interest sent to dashawn.groves@dc.gov by COB Friday, February 3rd

VI. Adjournment