



**Minutes (FINAL)
Of the meeting of the
NEVADA OFFICE OF MINORITY HEALTH AND EQUITY
(NOMHE)
Black Leadership Advisory Council (BLAC) Subcommittee Meeting
October 25, 2023**

The Black Leadership Advisory Council (BLAC) Subcommittee held a public meeting on Wednesday, October 25th, 2023, beginning at 10:04 am at the location: This meeting was held via Microsoft Teams.

Karina Fox welcomed everyone to the 3rd meeting of the Nevada Office of Minority Health and Equity's (NOMHE) Black Leadership Advisory Council (BLAC) - Subcommittee. She introduced herself as the NOMHE's Public Health Resource Officer, assigned to support any subcommittees to NOMHE's full Advisory Committee.

She asked for confirmation that the recording had begun.

Evelyn S. Donis de Miranda confirmed that recording began.

Karina Fox noted that the meeting was supported by ASL interpretation and closed captioning options to ensure accessibility for all attendees. She encouraged everyone as a matter of courtesy, to ensure that all phones were silenced. A few additional housekeeping notes were:

- Attendees state their name when speaking to aid in the accurate transcription of minutes. When not speaking, mute their microphone.
- Subcommittee members joining virtually were asked to keep their cameras on throughout the meeting and remain engaged until its conclusion.
- Non- Subcommittee members, including presenters or those providing remarks during the Public Comment session, should activate their cameras only while speaking.

Karina Fox introduced the Chair, Dr. Samuel Hickson.

I. Call to Order, Roll Call, Welcome and Opening Statement

Dr. Samuel Hickson, Chair

Chair Hickson introduced himself as the Chair of the Black Leadership Advisory Council (BLAC). He called the meeting to order on October 25th, 2023, at 10:04 AM. He asked BLAC Subcommittee members to acknowledge their presence when they heard their names.

Karina Fox assisted with roll call.

BLAC Subcommittee members present: Dr. Samuel Hickson (Chair), Adrienne Feemster Cobb, Jewel Eldridge, Kamilah Bywaters, Dr. Mary L. House, Will Rucker. Alisa Howard joined at 10:16 a.m.

Six members were in attendance, the quorum was achieved.

Also present were the following NOMHE staff: Evelyn S. Donis de Miranda, Tina Dortch, Karina Fox, Alexandra Neal, Princette Bowling, Amanda Annan, Carlos Ramirez Gomez,

Chair Hickson asked members of the public to drop their name and their affiliation in the chat box.

Members of the public present: Someone joined via phone 702-281-7031 at 10:08, ASL Interpreters (2), Ireti Fawehinmi, Devonte "Greater Youth Sports", Adela Victorino, Janet Serial, Allison Genco, Isabelle Silva, Michale, Venton II, Kashona Carew, Sarina Nez,

Chair Hickson expressed excitement for this mission for two reasons to further accomplish the mission of the BLAC Subcommittee but also to welcome the two new members, Dr. Mary House, and Jewel Eldridge. Chair Hickson asked the two new members to provide a summary of themselves.

Dr. Mary House thanked Dr. Hickson and stated her appreciation for being on the subcommittee. She is the CEO of CHR INC, which was founded back in 1996 as the First Lady of Mountain Top Faith Ministries. She has been in Las Vegas for over 33 years. She has two passions 1) to advocate for domestic violence. She believes that more women need to be empower. November and October are domestic violence awareness months, along with breast cancer awareness month. Domestic violence is something that is often put on the back burner, especially in the community. Her organization hosts free monthly workshop to empower women. She is a survivor of childhood domestic violence. Her main platform is environmental justice. She has been in that space since 1980. She is very active in education people of environmental justice, how to keep their homes safe, what programs are available out there. Mountain Top Faith Ministries have partners with Clark County to help people repair their homes.

Chair Hickson thanked Dr. Mary House and introduced Jewel Eldridge.

Jewel Eldridge through the ASL interpreter stated the following: She stated that her screen was freezing, so she had a hard time catching up with the interpretation. She stated her name as Jewel Eldridge. She is the executive president of the NV DBA (The Black Deaf Association). She has been the president for over three years. She advocates for black, deaf, and hard of hearing individuals. She is also the owner of the "Deaf People of Color". She focuses on mental health and providing resources and support for deaf people of color, especially interpreters. Education for the rest of the population on deaf people of color regarding the issues that they face is something that she promotes. She expressed her gratitude for being a member of the BLAC Subcommittee. She has been doing this type of work for almost 10 years. It is a lot of work. She lived in Chicago before moving to Las Vegas. There are fewer resources in the Las Vegas area.

Chair Hickson thanked Jewel Eldridge for her wonderful introduction. He acknowledged that the Subcommittee has representation for those who are hard of hearing as they are a minority as well.

II. Public Comment

Dr. Samuel Hickson, Chair

Public Comment will be taken during this agenda item. No action may be taken on a matter raised under this item until the matter is included on the agenda as an item on which action may be taken. The Chair of the Black Leadership Advisory Council Subcommittee will place a two (2) minute time limit on the time individuals may address the Committee. The Chair may elect to allow public comment on a specific agenda item when that item is being considered. To provide public comment telephonically, dial (775) 321 – 6111 any time after the Chair announces the period of public comment. When prompted to provide the Meeting ID, enter 508 009 465#.

Dr. Hickson opened the floor for open comment and encouraged everyone to state their name when making public comments. He asked Karina Fox for assistance in recognizing individuals who may have a public comment.

Chair Hickson stated that there were no public comments.

III. Approval of July 12, 2023, BLAC Meeting Minutes (For Possible Action):

Dr. Samuel Hickson, Chair

Chair Hickson asked BLAC Subcommittee members if they had any questions or concerns regarding the minutes.

Kamilah Bywaters stated that she didn't have any concerns.

Dr. House stated that she had no concerns.

Chair Hickson asked for motion to approve the July 12th, 2023, BLAC Subcommittee meeting minutes.

Dr. Mary House made the motion to approve the minutes.

Adriene Feemster Cobb seconded the motion.

All were in favor.

Chair Hickson approved the July 12, meeting minutes at 10:15 a.m.

IV. Revisit Subcommittee Objectives, Related Pulse Report Development Processes (For Possible Action)

Dr. Samuel Hickson, Chair

Chair Hickson stated that he would like to revisit the BLAC Subcommittee purpose. The BLAC Subcommittee's purpose is to identify policies that create or perpetuate inequities for the Black community to collaborate with. NOMHE, the Black community and supportive stakeholders to ensure equitable treatment of all Nevadans and seek to address structural and inequities in this state to serve as a resource for community groups on issues, programs, resources of funding and compliance requirements within the state to advance the interest of the Black community, and to promote coordinated efforts, advocacy, and collaboration with NOMHE, the Black community and supportive stakeholders. Chair Hickson stated that it is important to note that promoting legislation or providing legislative testimony that BLAC Subcommittee members do so independently of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and the Office of Minority Health and

Equity (NOMHE) or its Advisory Committee or the Black Leadership Advisory Committee, which are intended to be political. Overall, the purpose of the BLAC Subcommittee is to essentially improve equity for Black Nevadans. Furthermore, Chair Hickson stated that the eight categories discussed during the last meeting had now been condensed to be more consistent and cohesive as well as effective. Those categories dropped down from 8 to six. Each category now has a sub-category. BLAC Subcommittee members to look at whether to accept or not A) BLAC Subcommittee purpose and B) revamping the revised categories.

Chair Hickson asked BLAC Subcommittee members if they had any concerns about the current statement.

Dr. Mary House stated that she had no concerns.

Jewel Eldridge through ASL interpreter stated that she had a concern on the communication category. She had some suggestions.

Chair Hickson stated that Jewel Eldridge suggestions would best be serve in the next section of the agenda.

Chair Hickson asked for a motion to officially adopt the purpose statement for the BLAC Subcommittee.

Dr. Mary House made the motion to adopt the BLAC Subcommittee purpose statement.

Adrienne Feemster Cobb seconded the motion to adopt the revised purpose statement.

All were in favor.

Chair Hickson stated that the BLAC Subcommittee purpose statement was approved in October.

Chair Hickson stated that the eight categories were dropped to six, which may include subcategories. This change was based on a profound examination of further effectiveness and more efficiency in creating the Pulse Report. It appears as if there was some overlap among the categories. Also, during the previous BLAC Subcommittee someone expressed the desire to create more actions as opposed to sitting around and talking about change without doing anything. The refined list of categories include:

- “Public Policy, Law and Government”, which has two subcategories political determinants of the economic cost of wellness and political determinants impact on the business of healthcare. The categories of “Business, Economy, Technology and Entrepreneurship” no longer exist as stand-alone categories. NOMHE Advisory Committee and the BLAC Subcommittee are supposed to look at the equity of health and healthcare access and therefore both entities must align their purposes to those.
- The second category is “Health and Wellness” with the subcategory of systems gaps within healthcare workforce.
- The third category is “Faith-Based Communities” with a possible subcategory of equitable impact of interfaith collaborations on community well-being.
- The fourth category is “Education and Youth” with the subcategory of public safety implication and impact on students’ well-being and achievement”.
- The fifth category is “Environment” with the possible subcategory of public health infrastructure gaps related to heat vulnerability. Some examples of that could be sustainable communities and green living, air qualities disparities, urban heat island, climate change vulnerability.
- The sixth category is “Communication, Arts, and Culture” with a possible category of communication barriers experienced in the current healthcare infrastructure.

Chair Hickson opened the floor up for the BLAC Subcommittee members to discuss the change. Also, Chair Hickson acknowledged that Representative Jewel Eldridge had some questions and concerns about this topic previously.

Representative Jewel Eldridge through the ASL Interpreted thanked Chair Hickson. Also, she asked Chair Hickson if he could repeat the question as she was having a hard time with the video quality.

Chair Hickson stated that at this time Representative Jewel Eldridge could bring forward any questions or concerns she had about the “Communications, Arts, and Culture” category.

Representative Jewel Eldridge through the ASL Interpreted stated the following:

- She stated that her concerns were that when she goes out to the clinics and healthcare centers, there are no interpreters for deaf individuals that need help with their mental health issues.
- She has observed through her own research at clinics and schools.

ASL Interpreter stated that she had difficulty seeing Representative Jewel Eldridge’s video feed.

- It is hard for people to communicate. There are so many people that don’t have access to mental health services and in the education system as well. That is one of Representative Jewel Eldridge’s concerns.

Representative Jewel Eldridge pulled something up from her tablet. She stated that it is very important to have resources available, such as educational material. These need to be provided to folks. Some individuals don’t have health insurance so they cannot afford to access care for themselves. They also live on limited incomes. They have Social Security income from disability. Those individuals need to be seen. Clinics need to make sure that they have resources available. Other individuals don’t have money to pay for services and let alone transportation to take care of their health needs. There are many issues with access.

Representative Jewel Eldridge believes that the BLAC Subcommittee needs to set up support for the Black deaf community and other people of color. She believes that the organizations that serve this population need to be contacted. Community members need to know what the ones are out there, especially those who are looking for services and are not getting them.

Chair Hickson thanked Representative Jewel Eldridge for expressing her concerns. The purpose of the pulse report and the BLAC Subcommittee is to understand what the challenges within the community and those are that are hearing impaired and minority or any other individual that might be suffering from equitable access to health care in the services that they need.

Representative Will Rucker has stated that he had an addition or a recommendation for the “Change for Health and Wellness” Subcategory. He believes it is a bit redundant and it could be combined within the “Public Health and Healthcare” and the “Healthcare Workforce”. As for the second subcategory he recommended the addition “Social Determinants of Health” and the “Dimensions of Wellness”.

Chair Hickson thanked Representative Will Rucker for the comment and asked Alexandra Neal or Karina Fox to make note of that.

Chair Hickson acknowledged Representative Alisa Howard for comment.

Representative Alisa Howard wanted to reinforce what Representative Will Rucker said.

Chair Hickson thanked Representative Alisa Howard and acknowledged Representative Dr. Mary L. House for commenting.

Representative Dr. Mary L. House stated that under the environmental category, there should be public health infrastructure gaps related to heat vulnerability. She also believes that weatherization could be included in a separate category. The needs of the community related to this are not met or even tap. When it comes to all the weatherization money that is out there and the funding for homes, especially in the historic West side. People need total weatherization not just windows and doors. They need insulation and appliances. The funding is going to other areas and very little is going to the community. It has been extremely hot, and the electricity bills are extremely high as well.

Chair Hickson thanked Representative Dr. Mary L. House and agreed with her statements. He stated that her comment would be noted as a potential addition to that second bullet point for a subcategory.

Karina Fox thanked Alisa Howard for her feedback. She stated that when it comes to the “Health and Wellness” category there are two members and that is why there are subcategories. So, each member can tackle a subcategory.

Chair Hickson thanked Karina Fox and acknowledged that Representative Alisa Howard had her hand up.

Representative Alisa Howard had a question regarding her contribution to the Pulse Report. She asked if she would be including her information to the second revised category that was just mentioned or the previous one?

Karina Fox stated that currently feedback was being received regarding the subcategories, but Alisa Howard could reword the subcategory as she is a matter expert. Also, Karina Fox stated that the subcategories would be sent to all the subcommittees members following the meeting. When working on the report all representatives should recognize the whole state of Nevada, not just the South.

Chair Hickson stated that the recommendations received during this meeting would be taken into consideration. He acknowledged Kamilah Bywaters for comment.

Representative Kamilah Bywaters stated that she needed more time to think about the education and youth section, especially to review the public safety implications and its impact on students’ well-being and achievements.

Chair Hickson understood.

Tina Dortch was very pleased to hear the conversation. She stated that it would be helpful to hear from each person regarding their category, especially from the “Public Policy Law and Government” addressed by Adrienne Feemster Cobb.

Chair Hickson asked Representative Adrienne Feemster Cobb for her thoughts on the subcategories related to the “Public Policy, Law and Government”.

Representative Adrienne Feemster Cobb agreed with Representative Kamilah Bywaters as she needed more time to revisit her initial information. She did say that the first thing that caught her attention were the social drivers related to this category and the subcategories of political determinants of the economic cost and wellness, as well as political determinants that impact on the business of health care. She believes she needs more time to rework her information.

Chair Samuel Hickson thanked Representative Adrienne Feemster Cob for her comments. He acknowledged Jewel Eldridge for comment.

Representative Jewel Eldridge, though ASL interpreter stated that she agreed that more time was needed as she was working on this report by herself. There are many issues affecting the deaf community, specifically with lack of communication. She believes that statistics are very important to include in the report.

Chair Hickson thanked Representative Eldridge and acknowledged that Representative Alisa Howard had her hand up.

Representative Alisa Howard stated that she knows that the BLAC Subcommittee Representatives are supposed to be the experts on the individual categories but there are some categories that intertwined, such as public policy. As many know public health professionals, public policy plays a big part in public health and most people testify or bring bills to help legislators. She was wondering if representatives could add comments to other categories.

Chair Hickson stated that it was impossible to think that categories themselves could be able to stand alone without intersecting with another category. He encourages commentary among each other sections as that will help create a more robust report. Chair Hickson believes that once the structure of the report is complete, everyone will be able to fill in the gaps. He feels that there would be an opportunity for cross commentary. One of the main purposes of the reports is to display how all problems interconnect with each other.

Karina Fox stated that there is a due date for the Pulse Report. She advice representatives if they think about taking on a subcategory to ensure that their workload is manageable.

Representative Kamilah Bywater would like to recommend editing the public safety in education and youth section to highlight the public safety implication. Social determinants of health on students' well-being and achievements could be edited. Then public safety could fall into that.

Chair Hickson thanked Representative Bywaters and stated that those recommendations will be considered. He moved to the next section of the discussion, which is finalizing the draft for the Pulse Report. As discussed, certain changes will be made to the subcategories and the categories. He highlighted Karina Fox's comment about representatives taken on manageable work. Chair Hickson stated that the Pulse Report should focus on recommendations that may be able to address or rectify the issues. They must be items that could be actionable.

Chair Hickson put forward the requirements of the Pulse Report:

- Focus on Nevada's Black community wellness not just in the South, but the entire state.
- Use data points in brief narratives.
- Prove recommendations and identify resources.
- The Pulse Report should not be confused with an action plan, but it is important to note that these recommendations will have weight.
- Refrain from the use of the words like "impact change" because at the end of the day, even though the report will propose recommendations and possible change, it is up to the powers to adopt and implement those changes.
- Policy change should be encouraged, but ultimately the officials will need to take that side to impact.
- 1–2-page summary of supporting literature review contents

Representative Jewel Eldridge through ASL interpreter stated that it seemed as if everyone got kicked out of the meeting. She wanted to confirm that everything was okay.

Chair Hickson stated that everything was okay and asked for input from Alexandra Neal and/or Karina Fox.

Alexandra Neal stated that everything was okay, and everyone was still online.

Karina Fox confirmed the same thing.

Chair Hickson stated that he wanted to make sure that everyone had an understanding about the topic and the subcategories in the Pulse Report. He stated that having a summary and background is going to be important to provide an explanation of the issues. Also, having literature that supports the topic will be crucial. All sources need to have their citation. Representatives must ensure that they include all their sources, but also include their voice.

Chair Hickson asked individuals if they had any questions.

Representative Jewel Eldridge through ASL interpreter asked Dr. Hickson to give more details about the Pulse Report via email. She is new to the group.

Chair Hickson stated that she'll be getting a draft of what the Pulse Report looks like.

Karina Fox stated that an example of a Pulse Report was already provided in her last email.

Tina Dorch stated that NOMHE wants to accommodate Representative Jewel Eldridge. Tina Dorch stated that the BLAC Subcommittee Representatives identify materials and then NOMHE put them together.

Chair Hickson acknowledged Kamilah Bywaters for comment.

Representative Kamilah Bywaters stated that she wanted to clarify that she needed to send a revised version of her initial submission for the Pulse Report.

Chair Hickson stated that if Representative Bywaters felt that she needed to revise her section based on today's comments, to absolutely go ahead and submit a revised version.

Representative Alisa Howard asked about the due date to send the information to Karina Fox.

Karina Fox stated that she would be going over the timeline.

Representative Alisa Howard had another question, she asked if BLAC Subcommittee Representatives are supposed to work together and if efforts could combine or separate.

Chair Hickson stated that he encouraged collaboration, but the breakdowns of the section would be sort of a category within that section of the Pulse Report. So, yes, if Representative Will Rucker wants to collaborate on Alisa Howard's section, both could either submit a joint proposal for that section of "Health and Wellness" that would sort of detail the recommendation for both of their subcategories. Or everyone could submit their recommendations individually for their subcategory. Then those would be put into the "Health and Wellness" main category but broken out into different sections. Chair Hickson loves the idea of people collaborating, especially because there is a lot of overlaps among the categories etc.

The BLAC Subcommittee subcategories discussion was not put down for voting as Chair Hickson believes that a lot of thought needs to happen from the subcommittee members. He didn't feel that action could be taken at this moment.

v. Discussion and Approval of Future Meeting Dates, Agenda Topics (For Possible Action):

Dr. Samuel Hickson, Chair

Chair Hickson stated that the Pulse Report must be completed by the next BLAC Subcommittee meeting either on February 10th or 17th. This means that all materials should be turned in to Karina Fox by December 4th.

Chair Hickson asked members if this was a realistic timeline.

All representatives stated that the timeline worked for them.

Chair Hickson stated that Tina Dorch will send an email with instructions and to send all materials no later than December 4th so the Pulse Report could be finalized in early January.

Chair Hickson asked BLAC Subcommittee members that worked best for them January 10th or 17th, 2024 for the next subcommittee meeting.

BLAC Subcommittee members voted as followed:

- January 10th 10-12 (1 vote)
- January 17th 10-12 (5 votes)

Chair Hickson made a motion to have the next BLAC Subcommittee meeting on Wednesday January 17th, 2024.

Adrienne F. made the motion to meet on January 17th, 2024.

Dr. House seconded the motion.

All were in favor.

Chair Hickson approved that the next meeting would occur on 11:08 a.m.

The Pulse Port will be discussed at the NOMHE Advisory Committee on February 13th, 2024.

VI. Public Comment

Dr. Samuel Hickson, Chair

Public Comment will be taken during this agenda item. No action may be taken on a matter raised under this item until the matter is included on the agenda as an item on which action may be taken. The Chair of the **Black Leadership Advisory Council Subcommittee** will place a two (2) minute time limit on the time individuals may address the Committee. The Chair may elect to allow public comment on a specific agenda item when that item is being considered. To provide public comment telephonically, dial (775) 321 – 6111 any time after the Chair announces the period of public comment. When prompted to provide the Meeting ID, enter 508 009 465#.

Chair Hickson acknowledged Janet Serial for Public Comment.

Janet Serial stated that she was joining via phone and video. She stated that she was much in support of the direction of the BLAC Pulse Report. She wanted to remind that there are community base organizations in the BLAC Community that have a vested interest in what's going on throughout the BLAC Subcommittee.

Ireti Fawehinmi stated that this was their first time attending this meeting. Their organization focus on health equity though vaccine, equity, and equality. They just wanted to know if there are any steps that are taken towards the categories that were mentioned earlier. They have been revised and approved and then also how can the community members or organizations be part of it.

Chair Hickson restated Ireti's question, she asked how the categories for the report were created.

Ireti Fawehinmi stated that "yes" was her question, but also, she wanted to know how the actions are going to be like.

Chair Hickson stated that the categories were created based on examination of research, political commentary, understanding of issues that were impacting Black Nevadans throughout the state, but in the county. The categories were created through addressing cortical areas that impact the lives of Black Nevadans. NOMHE is the organization dedicated to improving health equity and access to healthcare, the categories are specifically geared toward how each of the issues that impact the Black community within Nevada are directly related to correlated to health. It is for the subcommittee to investigate more intimately the issues that are occurring within their category and submit those for the production of the Pulse Report. So, the actions particularly pertain to the subcommittee members to produce that materials can create this final Pulse Report that then will be approved by the NOMHE Advisory Committee. So, at this time, the subcommittee members must produce those recommendations.

Tina Dortch stated that this group is invested in hearing input from the community. As previously stated, the BLAC Subcommittee members' efforts are very limited. The public is welcome to watch the work happening. The work is done very transparently. Once the report is completed, it will be made public. It will be shared with the NOMHE Advisory Committee at the quarterly meeting. It will also be on the NOMHE website.

VII. Adjournment

Dr. Samuel Hickson, Chair

Alisa Howard made the motion to adjourn the meeting.

Dr. House seconded the motion.

All were in favor.

Chair Hickson adjourned the meeting at 11:19 a.m. on Wednesday, October 25th, 2023.

This meeting will be held virtually (via conference video & call). Notice of this meeting was faxed, e-mailed, or hand delivered for posting to the following locations:

- Washoe County Health District, 1001 E. Ninth St., Reno, NV 89512
- NV Dept of Public Safety – Capitol Police, 555 E. Washington Ave, Las Vegas, NV 89101
- State Capitol Building, 101 N. Carson Street, Carson City, NV 89701
- Community Based Care, 1010 Ruby Vista Drive, Ste 104, Elko, NV 89801
- Division of Public and Behavioral Health, 4150 Technology Way, Carson City, NV 89706
- Aging Disability Services Division, 3320 W Sahara, Ste 100, LV, NV 89102
- Southern Nevada Health District, 280 S. Decatur Blvd. Las Vegas, NV 89107
- Dept of Health and Human Services, Director's Office, 400 King St, Suite 300, Carson City, NV 89703

Agenda and meeting materials may also be viewed on the internet at:

the Nevada Office of Minority Health and Equity's website:

[NOMHE-AC-2023 \(nv.gov\)](https://nomhe-ac-2023.nv.gov)

and

the Department of Administration's website:

<https://notice.nv.gov/>

Written comments in excess of one typed page on any agenda items which requires a vote are respectfully requested to be submitted to the Nevada Office of Minority Health and Equity at nomhe@dhhs.nv.gov three (3) calendar days prior to the meeting to ensure that adequate consideration is given to the material. We are pleased to make reasonable accommodations for members of the public who

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have a disability and require special accommodations or assistance to attend/participate in the meeting. Also, copies of meeting materials can be made available. Requests for accommodations or meeting materials should be directed to the Nevada Office of Minority Health and Equity Program Manager by emailing tdortch@dhhs.nv.gov or by calling Tina Dortch at 702-486-2151 no later than three (3) working days prior to the meeting date.