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**Minutes (Draft)  
Of the meeting of the  
NEVADA OFFICE OF MINORITY HEALTH AND EQUITY (NOMHE)  
Black Leadership Advisory Council (BLAC) Subcommittee Meeting  
Wednesday, May 3, 2023**

*The Black Leadership Advisory Council (BLAC) Subcommittee held a public meeting on Wednesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, beginning at 10:07 am at the location:*

*This meeting was held via Microsoft Teams*

Karina Fox welcomed everyone to the inaugural meeting of the Nevada Office of Minority Health and Equity (NOMHE) Black Leadership Advisory Council (BLAC) subcommittee and thanked everyone for joining. She asked that all public members remained camera off, mute themselves, and only speak during public comment. Also, she stated that all the subcommittee members need to be engaged with the cameras on. She introduced herself as the Public Health Resource officer for NOMHE and the facilitator for the meeting.

Karina Fox requested confirmation that the recording for the meeting had begun.

Alexandra Neal confirmed that the recording for the meeting had begun, and transcription had started.

Karina Fox stated that the meeting was supported by closed captioning to ensure accessibility for all attendees. She advised that everyone ensure that all phones were silent and kindly stay their name each time when speaking for the accuracy and description of the minutes.

Karina Fox also stated that non-subcommittee members, including presenters, so those providing public comment should activate their cameras only while speaking. As outlined in the agenda, individuals will have a 2-minute limit to address the subcommittee. She handed the agenda to Chair Dr. Samuel Hickson.

## **I. Call to Order, Welcome and Opening Statement**

Dr. Samuel Hickson, Chair

Chair Dr. Samuel Hickson thanked Karina Fox. Dr. Hickson introduced himself as the chair for the Black Leadership Advisory Council, to be henceforth referred to as (BLAC). Chari Hickson called this meeting to order on May 3rd, 2023, at 10:07 AM for roll call. He asked the BLAC subcommittee members to acknowledge their presence when they heard their name called by subcommittee support, NOMHE's Public Health Resource Officer, Karina Fox.

Karina Fox proceeded to do a roll call

Subcommittee members present: Dr. Samuel Hickson, Derek Rimson, Kamilah Bywaters, Will Rucker, Alisa Howard, and Adrienne Feemster Cobb.

Subcommittee members present by phone: Robert Bush.

Seven members were in attendance, the quorum was achieved.

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

Members of the public present: Maria RV DeCastro, Asma Awan, Cheryl Brewster, Esmeralda Chavez, Randi Wyrick, Debra Whitlock-Lax, Edward Coleman, Godwin Nwando, Mickena Butler, Anita Chatterjee, Kumrap, Pearl Paulo, Shannon Proctor, Siddharth, Tamara Stubblefield, Xavier Foster, and Lissette Montoya.

Chair Hickson thanked Karina Fox and welcomed everyone to the inaugural meeting of the BLAC Subcommittee at the Nevada Office of Minority Health and Equity (NOMHE). Chair Hickson welcomed all non-subcommittee members and the public, whether they were joining virtually, via video, or by phone. Chair Hickson requested that attendees put their names and titles in the chat box.

Chair Hickson reminded committee members about a survey circulating around from Karina Fox. The survey is to capture subcommittee members' profile information that will denote each of the topic areas of expertise and demographic information, including regional locations.

Chair Hickson stated that there are still four seats that need to be filled in the areas of business, economics, technology and entrepreneurship, safety, preparedness, communication, arts and culture, and the environment, per the protocol outlined in the bylaws. Chair Hickson indicated that Karina Fox will work with the Advisory Committee to develop a slate for an appointment during the August 15th meeting.

## **II. Public Comment**

Dr. Samuel Hickson, Chair

Public Comments 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 an agenda as an item on which action may be taken. The Chair of the Advisory Committee on Minority Health and Equity 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.

Chair Hickson asked if anyone in the phone would like to make a public comment.

Chair Hickson asked for assistance from Alexandra Neal and Karina Fox in recognizing any people that perhaps were missed.

Alexandra Neal confirmed that at the moment there was no one that had raised their hand or unmuted for public comment.

Chair Hickson continued with the agenda.

### **III. Discussion and Approval of Black Leadership Advocacy Council (BLAC) Subcommittee Purpose**

(For Possible Action):

Dr. Samuel Hickson, Chair

Chair Hickson restated the purpose that the Black Leadership Advisory Council (BLAC) serves as a catalyst for change and advocacy for diversity and equity within the state of Nevada as a subcommittee to the Nevada Office of Minority Health and Equity. The purpose of the BLAC Subcommittee is to engage community members in the decision-making process to improve the quality of life for Black African American citizens in the state of Nevada. The BLAC Subcommittee will act in the advisory capacity to develop, review, and recommend policies and actions designed to address discrimination and racial inequity in Nevada. There are over 272,000 Black Nevadans, and the state recognizes the disadvantages and barriers that affect the Black community.

The BLAC Subcommittee will consist of leadership advisors in the following areas noted health and wellness, public policy, law, and government, business, economics and technology, safety, preparedness, communication, arts and culture, education, and youth and faith-based communities.

It is important to note that the Council will also identify policies that create or perpetuate inequities for the Black community. It will work to collaborate with NOMHE, the Black community, and supportive stakeholders to ensure equitable treatment of all Nevadans and seek to address structural inequities in this state. It will serve as a resource for community groups on issues, programs, resources of funding, and compliance requirements within the state to advise the interests of the Black community and promote coordinated efforts, advocacy, and collaboration with NOMHE, the black community, and support of stakeholders.

Chair Hickson made clear that at this time that when providing legislative testimony, the BLAC Subcommittee members must not or must do so independently of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Office of Minority Health and Equity or its Advisory Council, or the Black Leadership Advisory Council, which are all intended to be political.

Chair Hickson opened the floor to the BLAC Subcommittee members on any feedback related to the purpose statement as read and written.

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

Chair Hickson thanked Kamilah Bywaters.

Chair Hickson asked if there was any other feedback.

Bishop Derek A. Rimson stated that he had no feedback.

Robert Bush stated that he had no feedback.

Karina Fox acknowledged the arrival of Alisa Howard and Adrienne Feemster Cobb.

Chair Hickson thanked Karina Fox and asked again if anyone had any feedback from the subcommittee members on the purpose statement as read and written. Chair Hickson acknowledge that we heard from 3 committee members.

Adrienne Feemster Cobb stated that she did not have any feedback at this time.

Will Rucker had no feedback as well.

Chair Hickson stated that we had not heard from Alissa Howard and asked Karina Fox to confirm.

Alisa Howard stated that she didn't have any feedback.

Chair Hickson asked for a motion to adopt the purpose or statement.

Adrienne Feemster Cobb made a motion to adopt.

Chair Hickson thanked Adrienne Feemster Cobb and asked for a second.

Robert Bush seconded the motion.

Chair Hickson asked everyone to say "Aye" if they were in favor.

Will Rucker was in favor.

Bishop Derek A. Rimson was in favor.

Kamilah Bywaters was in favor.

Chair Hickson asked if anyone opposed the decision to raise their hand.

Chair Hickson for the record stated that we didn't hear or saw any opposition. Chair Hickson proceed to approve the purpose statement of the Black Leadership Advisory Council this day, May 3rd, 2023, at 10:16 AM.

#### **IV. Establishment of BLAC Subcommittee Objectives and Activities (For Possible Action):**

Chair Hickson moved to the next exciting portion of our agenda, the establishment of the BLAC Subcommittee objectives and activities. Chair Hickson advised the subcommittee members, that this work plan is intended to be accomplished over the next two to three meetings, however, that is at discretion depending upon what is currently decided.

Chair Hickson turned the tide to Karina Fox, to discuss an exciting opportunity, which is the recognition of the BLAC policy-level interests and what NOMHE offers as its legislative tracker.

Chair Hickson notified Karina Fox that she was muted.

Karina Fox thanked Chair Hickson. She stated the legislative tracker serves as an aid in navigating the activity of the current legislative session. Notwithstanding the above, the BLAC Subcommittee members may identify opportunities to lend their individual voices.

Karina Fox indicated that the Nevada Office of Minority Health and Equity (NOMHE) is looking at this legislative session. The tracker contains bills that have an equity impact or influence on one of the social determinants of health, represented by the BLAC membership. The tracker has three focuses that involved the Department of Health and Human Services.

Chair Hickson thanked Karina Fox and reiterated that that tracker will be distributed to the BLAC Subcommittee members following the May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023's meeting. Chair Hickson invited BLAC Subcommittee members to provide input on what they hope to accomplish over the next three meetings.

Kamilah Bywaters suggested that perhaps the group could provide an outline of some possible problem statements or challenges that the BLAC Subcommittee members see that is happening. Statistics could be included so that the BLAC Subcommittee can understand what the problems and issues are that BLAC is trying to build effective solutions for.

Chair Hickson thanked Kamilah Bywater. Chair Hickson restated Kamilah Bywater's suggestion as followed: the BLAC Subcommittee could develop and understand the problems that are faced in the community.

Chair Hickson asked Kamilah Bywaters if there was anything actionable that she wanted to accomplish beyond developing a research project.

Kamilah Bywaters stated that to build the working plan for the BLAC Subcommittee, it would be important or helpful to see what some of the problems are in the community to understand the problem and then, develop a working plan or some actionable items around those issues.

Chair Hickson acknowledged that Kamilah Bywaters' ideas sound like a community assessment before developing actionable objectives and activities. Chair Hickson asked for confirmation.

Kamilah Bywaters confirmed.

Robert Bush stated that identifying the disparities in our communities is a good plan. Then, structural programmatic changes can be made. Sometimes, plans are created but they fade either because of a lack of enthusiasm or because of some lack of follow-through. The BLAC Subcommittee needs to be able to have a plan that is consistent. The plan should include being in the community, being the community, and being on the ground bringing some resources.

Chair Hickson thanked Representative Bush. Chair Hickson agreed very much with Robert Bush's statement. Chair Hickson stated that the BLAC Subcommittee is not just about identifying the problems and needs of the community, but also developing realistic and appropriate goals that don't seem to fade once a plan is created. The BLAC Subcommittee wants to stick to it and be present in the community. Chair Hickson asked the BLAC Subcommittee members if that was an accurate assumption or assessment.

Chair Hickson asked if other members wanted to provide input on their thoughts on what the work plan should be. The term work plan was utilized loosely following what Kamilah Bywaters shared previously.

Will Rucker added a statement that focused on including the opportunity for the BLAC Subcommittee to establish norms as far as the culture as a subcommittee and their approach to this work centering values and just having those clear. It is important to create the program scope in line with what the BLAC Subcommittee wants and aspires to be.

Chair Hickson thanked Will Rucker. Chair Hickson expressed agreement with Will Rucker's statement. Chair Hickson restated that the BLAC Subcommittee wants to make sure that anything that the BLAC Subcommittee does is aligned with the identity of who BLAC is as a subcommittee and what the BLAC Subcommittee represents.

Will Rucker stated that was correct.

Chair Hickson asked others to provide input.

Bishop Derek A. Rimson added that if it's possible that whatever strategies are moved forward that the BLAC Subcommittee include the pastors in the Black community.

Chair Hickson thanked Bishop Derek A. Rimson for the statement and expressed agreement. Chair Hickson acknowledged the importance of religious organizations within the Black community. Chair Hickson stated that is

something to consider as well. Chair Hickson believes that religious organizations, especially pastors have influence that can help put forward the BLAC Subcommittee mission.

Alisa Howard corrected the term from religious organizations to faith-based organizations to be more inclusive of everyone.

Chair Hickson thanked Alisa Howard.

Chair Hickson stated that Representative Feemster Cobb had not spoken and that he wanted to ensure that nobody was missed.

Committee member Adrienne Feemster Cobb stated her agreement with the subcommittee members. She also added that the BLAC Subcommittee could use the current census records to know more about what community demographics look like when moving forward with the plans.

Chair Hickson thanked Adrienne Feemster Cobb. Chair restated Adrienne Feemster Cobb's thoughts for clarification. The BLAC Subcommittee will ensure inclusivity of how the community looks through the census records.

Adrienne Feemster Cobb confirmed.

Chair Hickson asked Karina Fox and Alexandra Neal for help ensuring that no one was missed. Again, Chair Hickson asked the subcommittee members to share their thoughts and feedback before moving forward.

Karina Fox confirmed that everyone had shared.

Chair Hickson recapped some of the ideas that were shared by the BLAC subcommittee. The subcommittee members' work plan would be moved forward. The BLAC Subcommittee must understand the needs of the community by conducting a community assessment that would allow the BLAC Subcommittee to identify the problems and issues that are currently faced within the community. Polling census records will be utilized to understand the demographics of the community in the state of Nevada. The BLAC Subcommittee looks forward to creating an actionable plan, and objectives. The plan will include pastors from faith-based organizations to be inclusive of all faith-based participants. This will allow the already established community members that have established trust within the community to be able to assist the BLAC Subcommittee in moving forward with their actions, objectives, and goals. The BLAC Subcommittee would be able to produce enough information so that following the October 11th meeting, NOMHE staff would be able to assemble the information into a final report to be shared with the NOMHE's Advisory Committee during its November 14th meeting.

Chair Hickson asked to make a motion to adopt the work plan already mentioned.

Robert Bush suggested adding one more item.

Chair Hickson allowed Robert Bush to suggest.

To that list, Robert Bush would like to add the fostering and coordinating community partnerships with other community leaders and also philanthropists.

Chair Hickson thanked Robert Bush. Chair Hickson expressed excitement about the idea. Chair Hickson asked if anyone would make a motion to adopt this plan.

Mr. Will Rucker made the motion to adopt

Chair Hickson asked for a second.

Bishop Derek A. Rimson seconded the motion.

Chair Hickson asked if all were in favor, and to please indicate by saying aye or raising their hand.

No oppositions were noted.

Chair Hickson indicated that there were no oppositions, then the action work plan as noted in May 3<sup>rd</sup>'s meeting, was adopted. Chair Hickson asked Karina Fox and Alexandra Neil to assist in creating a formalized production of what the action items are. Those will be distributed to the subcommittee.

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

Dr. Samuel Hickson, Chair

Chair Hickson moved forward with the agenda item regarding the discussion and approval of future meeting dates and agenda topics. Chair Hickson stated that the appointment of the BLAC Subcommittee members is to exist for 12 months or one year. Chair Hickson advised that the appointment is for 12 months. There will be an opportunity for renewal of membership status if the committee exists.

Chair Hickson summarized the next steps and tasks to be completed during the next BLAC Subcommittee meetings.

- There would be an opportunity to formalize what was discussed today in terms of the action plan of how the subcommittee would like to conduct the community needs assessment.

Chair Hickson recognized that there are still open seats available on this subcommittee. He encouraged that if anybody had any potential representatives, please put them forward so they can go through the same process as the current members did. Current members were approved by the NOMHE Advisory Committee.

The BLAC Subcommittee will meet prior to the NOMHE Advisory Committee meeting to facilitate the process and allow the presentation of new members. Chair Hickson asked if there were any recommended dates for the BLAC Subcommittee meetings. One of those meetings was scheduled for July 12th at 10:00 AM. Chair Hickson asked subcommittee members if that seem to work for the BLAC Subcommittee members.

Karina Fox reminded Chair Hickson that those days were non-negotiable. Those days were already set in.

Chair Hickson thanked Karina Fox and restated that these dates are non-negotiable and locked in as July 12th at 10:00 AM and October 11th at 10:00 AM. He encouraged the BLAC Subcommittee members to attend the NOMHE Advisory Council meeting, which will be on May 9th and November 14th. He advised that BLAC Subcommittee members have 1/3 meeting, depending on how much work gets done. BLAC Subcommittee meetings are scheduled for July 12th and October 11<sup>th</sup>.

Alisa Howard asked if BLAC Subcommittee members would be receiving those calendar invites prior to the meeting and not a week prior like this last one.

Chair Hickson stated that "Yes" those invites to the committee members would be sent in advance. He apologized as the meeting had to be rescheduled due to his schedule. There was a very rushed meeting invite that was sent out. The meeting was intended to be about a week or so ago.

Alisa Howard thanked Chair Hickson. She stated that she only wanted to know to ensure her availability.

Karina Fox stated that she would like to make a correction regarding the NOMHE Advisory Committee meetings. The NOMHE Advisory Committee meetings would be on May 9<sup>th</sup>, August 15<sup>th</sup>, and November 14<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Hickson asked if there were any other questions before moving to the next agenda item.

Robert Bush stated that he had two questions.

- Would it be possible for BLAC Subcommittee members to receive an email of the open subcommittee positions?
- Is it appropriate for BLAC Subcommittee members to get together and come up with names to fill those positions and present them to the Chair?

Chair Hickson stated that “Yes” information about the available seats that are open would be provided. Chair Hickson acknowledged that Tina Dortch placed the categories of the available vacancies on the subcommittee in the chat group.

Chair Hickson asked for clarification on the second question. Chair Hickson asked if the question was, is the BLAC subcommittee able to meet as a subcommittee to discuss those vacancies or to come up with recommended names? Then, he deferred the question to Karina Fox.

Karina Fox answer “Yes” to the question. She also noted that currently, the open positions are for the categories of business, economy, technology, entrepreneurship, safety, community culture, and environment.

Karina Fox invited BLAC Subcommittee members to email her any information for new members. There was no need to meet. She is available via text message as well.

Robert Bush indicated that he was joining by phone. He asked if today’s meeting notes would be available.

Karina Fox stated that those would be available by request. If anybody wants the minutes, certainly can be sent out. Also, the work plan would be sent out.

Robert Bush thanked Karina Fox.

Chair Hickson asked if any of the subcommittee members had any questions or feedback, before moving to the next agenda item.

Kamilah Bywater stated that she wanted to add something before moving on.

Chair Hickson allowed her to proceed.

Kamilah Bywater stated that she would like to ensure that the subcommittee is thinking about the families in Northern Nevada when nominating for open positions.

Chair Hickson thanked Kamilah Bywaters. He indicated that this is an excellent observation.

Karina Fox reminded the members of the subcommittee that these meetings are upheld by open meeting law, so NOMHE must follow those rules, and the minute will not be done today. Instead, the minutes will be done in about 30 days.

Chair Hickson thanked Karina Fox and asked for any other thoughts or suggestions. Since there were no other comments, he moved to the next agenda item.



## **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 an agenda as an item on which action may be taken. The Chair of the Advisory Committee on Minority Health and Equity 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.

Chair Hickson encouraged those on the phone to participate as well.

Chair Hickson recognized Cheryl Brewster for comment.

Cheryl Brewster thanked the Chair. She stated that she didn't hear any mention of partnering with academic institutions in Nevada. Community-based organizations and faith-based organizations were mentioned, but nothing was mentioned about academic institutions and how they can play a role in helping to address some of the health disparities in the community.

Chair Hickson thanked Ms. Brewster. Chair Hickson stated that the subcommittee will definitely take that under advisement and consider our ways of doing that.

Cheryl Brewster thanked the Chair.

Chair Hickson asked if there were any other comments. He asked Karina Fox and Alexandra Neal for assistance ensuring that he didn't miss anyone.

Alexandra Neal confirmed that there were no other comments, hands raised, or anybody who had unmuted for public comment.

Chair Hickson made a final call for public comment.

## **VII. Adjournment**

Dr. Samuel Hickson, Chair

Chair Hickson requested a motion for adjournment at 10:44.

Adrienne Feemster Cob made the motion to adjourn.

Will Rucker seconded the motion.

Everyone was in favor.

There was no opposition.

Chair Hickson called the meeting to adjourn on May 3rd, 2023, at 10:45 AM.

**This meeting was 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](mailto: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 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](mailto: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.*