

STATE of NEVADA



OFFICE OF MINORITY HEALTH AND EQUITY
2021-2022 BIENNIAL REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary (including NOMHE Staffing).....3

Vision, Mission, and Purpose.....4

NOMHE Advisory Committee (including creation of Black Leadership
Advisory Council Subcommittee).....4

Signature Events (including COVID-19 Responsiveness)6

Key Accomplishments9

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Nevada Office of Minority Health and Equity (NOMHE) experienced growth and increased responsibilities during 2021 – 2022. This growth, most notably reflected in the addition of personnel, was made possible by (a) an initial \$2,600,000 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Health Disparity (CDC HD) Grant sub awarded via the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) – Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH) and (b) a \$95,500 appropriation via 2021 Senate Bill 424. The CDC HD Grant award period is June 2021 – May 2023. Per its deliverables, it has allowed NOMHE to conduct COVID-19 related activities that address disparities in health-related services experienced by marginalized populations at higher rates and to develop strategies to improve capacity and service delivery of health and human service providing entities. An additional responsibility was added by NRS 232.475 and requires NOMHE to advise the Governor’s Public Health Resource Officer concerning strategies to address disparate health outcomes in Black, Indigenous and Persons of Color (BIPOC), rural and other underserved communities.

Meeting these responsibilities is made possible by NOMHE’s increased grant funded capacity and is reflected throughout the entries shared under the **Signature Events** and **Key Accomplishments** sections of this report. This period is also highlighted by NOMHE’s increased engagement in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts, awareness raising and resource development related to cultural competency – both within DHHS and other departments of state government and across external, collaborative efforts. Lastly, NOMHE continues to engage in informational outreach activities and foster partnerships with stakeholder groups including community and faith-based organizations; schools and universities; medical centers, health care systems and health departments; tribal, state, and federal government offices; policymakers and community residents; advisory committees and task forces. NOMHE ensures that entities create, and the community at large has access to, culturally competent and linguistically appropriate health information presented in accessible-friendly formats.

Organizational Chart

NOMHE’s state-authorized staffing, as of December 2022.

Table 1: NOMHE’s state-authorized staffing

NAME	TITLE
Tina Dortch	Program Manager
Karina Fox	Public Health Resource Officer

VISION AND MISSION

NOMHE's vision is to achieve optimal levels of health and wellness for all minority groups and marginalized communities across the state. Its mission is to avoid and/or reverse disproportionately experienced, health-related disparities among the state's most vulnerable, high-risk populations.

PURPOSE

NOMHE actions its vision and mission by supporting or facilitating educational and awareness building opportunities with equity-focused stakeholders, cultivating equity-focused collaboratives and amplifying initiatives that promote and facilitate the systemic embedding of health equity principles across all the social determining categories impacting health. These efforts serve to combat disproportionately experienced health disparities, ending disadvantages due to socially determined circumstances.

NOMHE's efforts are supported by its Advisory Committee.

NOMHE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The responsibilities of the Advisory Committee are specified at NRS 232.482

The committee consists of nine members appointed by either the State Board of Health or the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services and consideration must be given to whether the members reflect the ethnic and geographical diversity of this State as well as those having notable interest in health issues related to minorities, come from a nonprofit or healthcare sector or represent the public at large (NRS 232.482).

Per statute, one Legislator serves as an ex-officio member, and this member is appointed by the Legislative Commission to serve on the Advisory Committee. During the 2021-2022 Senator Pat Spearman served in this ex-officio, non-voting role.

The Advisory Committee fulfilled its duties, having met, and advised the NOMHE Program Manager, each quarter between 2021 – 2022. Members also provided feedback on the State's **2020-2021 Maternal Mortality and Severe Maternal Morbidity Report** as required by NRS 442.767 to ensure its recommendations reflected an equity perspective, such as emphasizing the importance of accessible transportation and inclusion of psychiatry as a resource during pregnancy.

As of December 2022, the Advisory Committee was fully seated as follows:

Table 2: Nevada Office of Minority Health and Equity (NOMHE) Advisory Committee Members

Name Organizational or Community Affiliation	Ethnicity and/or Race	Geographic Location w/in State	Initial Appointment Date
Dr. Samuel Hickson, Ph.D. (Chair) Intermountain Health, Desert Region	Hispanic	Southern Nevada	May 2022
Dr. Rutu Ezhuthachan, MD (Vice Chair) Health Plan of Nevada Medicaid	Asian	Southern Nevada	June 2022
Dr. Crystal Lee, Ph.D. United Natives Health Center	Native American	Southern Nevada	May 2020
Erik Jimenez Office of the Nevada State Treasurer	Hispanic	Northern Nevada	September 2019
Pastor Dr. Karen Anderson First AME Church of Las Vegas	African American	Southern Nevada	August 2020
Dr. Reimund Serafica, Ph.D., MSN School of Nursing – UNLV	Asian Pacific Islander	Southern Nevada	June 2022
Reverend Debra Whitlock Lax Bethel AME Church Sparks	African American	Northern Nevada	December 2022
Nancy Bowen Nevada Primary Care Association	Caucasian	Northern Nevada	December 2022
Nicholas Dunkle High Sierra Area Health Education Center	Latino	Northern Nevada	December 2022

Black Leadership Advisory Council (BLAC) Subcommittee

During the November 2022 Advisory Committee meeting, as allowed by its Bylaws, the members voted to create the Black Leadership Advisory Council (BLAC) Subcommittee. Its purpose 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. BLAC will act in an advisory capacity to develop, review, and recommend policies and actions designed to address discrimination and racial inequity in Nevada. During the first quarterly meeting of 2023, the Advisory Committee will vote to appointment the BLAC Subcommittee membership. Its activities will be further developed via publicly held meetings, with reports presented to the Advisory Committee.

SIGNATURE EVENTS (including COVID-19 Responsiveness)

January 2021:

Demystifying the Science Web Series: COVID – 19 Vaccines

In its on-going effort to provide the most current information on vaccines, NOMHE hosted national (the Morehouse School of Medicine – National COVID 19 Resiliency Network) and local (Nevada State Immunization Program) speakers via webinar to review the Emergency Authorization process and protocols for COVID – 19 vaccine distribution. The webinar attracted 100 viewers via Facebook livestream and (as of early February 2021) an additional 440 viewers watched. The message was further broadcast via NOMHE stakeholders such as Immunize Nevada, Nevada Faith and Health Coalition, and the Southern Nevada Chapter of the Society of Clinical Research Associates (SOCRA).

March – October 2021:

Fatigued and Taxed Listening Sessions

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and state of emergency highlighted gaps within the United States Public Health system. During this time, healthcare professionals were placed under increased pressure and those identifying as a part of a marginalized or minority population faced exacerbated disparities. The Minority Tax is the increased pressures, expectations, and disenfranchisement of individuals within a marginalized or minority population. This places minority populations and professionals in a unique position. They are often “taxed” with contributing to diversity awareness efforts, mentoring other professionals, and advocating for BIPOC patients all the while performing standard duties. These expectations can strain employer verses (BIPOC) patient allegiances, foster unexpected frustrations, and produce unexpected impacts on professional aspirations. Rounding out the stresses facing BIPOC medical, and healthcare professionals is the realization that they could find themselves a patient, victimized by a biased medical system. These circumstances and experiences are not unknown to minority groups nor is it rare. In response to the national cases of medical and healthcare professional burnout and disenfranchisement as well as Nevada’s then Governor Steve Sisolak’s Proclamation on racism as a public health crisis, NOMHE hosted a series of virtual Listening Sessions with three medical and healthcare professional populations in 2021.

- Black and African American Medical and Healthcare Professionals (Completed March 2021)
- Asian American and Pacific Islander Medical and Healthcare Professionals (Completed April 2021)
- Hispanic and Latino Medical and Healthcare Professionals (Completed October 2021)

These listening sessions were designed to learn of each group’s familiarity with the Minority Tax before the COVID-19 pandemic and during to allow the sharing of peer-to-peer experiences to better prepare BIPOC medical/healthcare professionals when working in high-stress, trauma-inducing environments. Over 50 healthcare professionals were invited to each listening session with 7 - 15 professionals participating in each.

August 2021:

Back to School Health Fair, Fountain of Hope (FOH) AME Church

NOMHE was invited to join the FOH annual Back to School Backpack Giveaway to amplify the event to a full-scale health fair in light of COVID-19 mitigation efforts and vaccine promotion. Specific goals identified and achieved were: dismantling inequity and disparities across socially vulnerable communities, strengthening community engagement and partnerships, and supporting and performing assessments relate to health disparities including COVID-19 and those exacerbated by the pandemic. Recognizing the opportunity to collect data to form an intersectional view of community trends, NOMHE established multiple data collection stations within the event structure. Information was collected through Southern Nevada Community Health Center, Nevada Health Centers Mammovan. NOMHE staff conducted surveys to ascertain, among other data points. rationales for vaccine hesitancy that were then used to develop future outreach. Lastly, NOMHE was able to coordinate/secure volunteer and logistical support by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), contributing to the efficiency of the event. This collaboration effort resulted in a Back to School/Community Health Fair with over 1000 attendees, 300 of which were in attendance for COVID-19 testing. This same event was repeated in August 2022, with a different set of providers and volunteers. The providers contacted by NOMHE fulfilled newly identified categories from community input. These categories include outdoor and indoor recreation opportunities.

April 2022:

April is Minority Health Awareness Month. As we continued transitioning out of emergency COVID-19 status, two of the five events were in person.

- *Utilizing Community Health Workers in the Public Health Workforce.* A webinar that educated health providers, community-based organizations, and people interested in health care careers about how CHWs are critical to ensuring the wellbeing of all Nevadans.
- *Get Connected: A Conversation with LGBTQ Service Providers and LGBTQ.* A webinar that brought together 32 LGBTQ service providers and LGBTQ youth to discuss issues they face and learn about resources to address them.
- A roundtable discussion on “*Unveiling the Challenges to HealthCare Access for Differently Abled Individuals*”. The 25 participants ranged from persons living with disabilities, to caregivers to service providing agencies.
- Resource Fair at Care with a Purpose Medical Clinic in North Las Vegas. Partnered with 9 service providers to provide general wellness screenings and distribute health literacy information to community members on a “walk-up” basis.
- A Vaccination and Covid 19 test kit give away event as a part of the Downtown Las Vegas Fresh Market shopping day in the Arts District of Las Vegas. There were 45 participants.

October/November 2022:

All of Us in Northern Nevada, October 2022, Sierra Nevada Health Center and All of Us Southern Nevada, November 2022, Pearson Community Health Center

The All of Us Research Program is an initiative on clinical trial diversification funded by the National Institute of Health. The goal of this initiative is to help build one of the most diverse health databases in history by including participants from all backgrounds. The outcome is to find ways to treat and prevent diseases, including those that disproportionately impact minority populations, by adding one million (diverse) samples to the database. Partnering in Northern Nevada with Sierra Nevada Health Center in October of 2022 to bring this event to this region, the NOMHE team secured 15 community partners to join, providing related resources to community members to create a Health Fair / sample collection event. An estimated 150 people participated during the N NV excursion. The S NV excursion took place in November 2022 at Pearson Community Center

with 25 community partners and approximately 200 people participated.

November 2022:

Nevada Minority Health Equity Coalition (NMHEC) 4th Annual Impact Summit

NMHEC hosted the annual Impact Summit 2022 in partnership with the City of Las Vegas, NOMHE, and UNLV School of Public Health. The event hosted 200+ attendees in S NV. The purpose of the summit is to provide a health equity forum to share ideas, challenges, and lessons learned but most importantly to highlight the important role all stakeholders play in ensuring equity through action, research, and engagement. As a lead collaborative partner, NOMHE planned two panel discussions, one for the Policy/Advocacy Track: Climate Justice Initiatives on Federal, State, and Local Levels, and another for the Capacity Building Track: How Health Literacy Can Produce Better Health Outcomes. NOMHE developed the panel description, objectives, identified and communicated with panel speakers and moderators, and planned the panel discussion questions.

Truckee Meadows Tomorrow (TMT) Connecting Communities with the Outdoors for Health and Well-Being

NOMHE was invited by the Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation (NDOR) Deputy Administrator, Matthew Weintraub, to present at one of the breakout sessions of the Nevada Trails, Transportation, and Tourism Summit in Reno, NV for the theme “Pathways to Better Quality Life”. NOMHE collaborated with the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) to develop a presentation “Connecting Communities with the Outdoors for Health and Well-Being”. NDOW presented findings from a survey done in the community about barriers to accessing the outdoors, and NOMHE used content from its Health Equity Action Plan (HEAP) - under development at this date - to address these barriers from a health equity perspective to better connect minority communities with outdoors. NOMHE received positive feedback from attendees and as a result, formed new partnerships with representatives of different organizations across Northern Nevada interested to learn more about the HEAP.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

DHHS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Efforts

In August of 2020 former Governor Sisolak released a Proclamation naming racism a public health crisis. As one of state government's largest provider of human services and programming, DHHS (through NOMHE) was identified as the lead to establish a strategy to action the Proclamation. With the support of the DHHS Director, a Steering Committee comprised of leadership across the five DHHS Divisions was convened, and division level DEI Advisory Groups were established to serve as liaisons. Evidence-based research shows that intentional development of a service providing agency's workforce to reflect the diversity of the state will transfer/result in more culturally responsive delivery of resources, thereby addressing health disparities. Therefore, to achieve its charge, the Steering Committee identified assessing the department's workforce inclusivity. In conjunction with this internal assessment, beginning in 2021, NOMHE staff initiated a Core Values Assessment (CVA) to help divisions identify opportunities to improve the culturally competent delivery of their services. A series of Key Informant Interviews, Department-wide DEI Town Halls/Forums and surveys were conducted between 2021 – 2022, drawing participants from a diverse, cross-section of DHHS personnel categories. Also, during this time, NOMHE began producing the DHHS DEI Quarterly Newsletter and facilitating the DHHS Black, Indigenous, Persons of Color (BIPOC) + Allies Support Group. During this period a series of training modules (completed by NOMHE's CDC HD Grant funded vendors) were being released for DHHS staff. By consulting these points of information, a departmental Situational Analysis of current DHHS conditions and agency-wide protocols impacting diversity and inclusivity, a corresponding Action Plan and DEI resource manuals will be produced. As of December 2022, these activities are on-going and interim work products pending.

Health Disparity Commercials

In 2022 NOMHE adopted the phrase "Health Matters; Equity Hurts No One." December of 2022 NOMHE procured four commercials, some featuring Spanish speakers or ASL interpretation and each with the intention of promoting self-empowerment (or pre-bunking) against misinformation or encouraging persons from traditionally underserved communities to become their own health advocate – to develop the skills to debunk misinformation. The commercials direct the viewer to informational resources at the Nevada Minority Health Equity Coalition's "Health Matters" webpage.

Diversity and Inclusion Liaisons (DILs)

2021 SB222 (NRS 232.0083 – 232.0087)

SB222 provisions that state agencies that interact with or offer programs and services affecting minority groups shall designate – to the extent practicable – a Diversity and Inclusion Liaison (DIL). A primary DIL function is to serve as a point of contact for minority residents interested in the services of their department. Per the statute, the Governor's Office for New Americans, the Nevada Commission on Minority Affairs and NOMHE must work collaboratively to support the DILs and facilitate one meeting of the DILs along with minority serving organizations (MSOs). During this meeting DILs and MSOs develop recommendations on how best to promote and improve access to state resources among the minority populations. However, during the inaugural year (2022), the three agencies conducted a survey of DILs to catalogue their department's respective resources, service delivery methods and experiences and also held two additional (DIL only) sessions to provide an orientation where additional support was offered and to gather feedback on the survey results of the newly identified DILs. Also per the statute, an annual report must be collaboratively prepared by the three agencies and submitted to the Governor and the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau. The first report was successfully prepared and contained recommendations reflective of the DIL survey results such as their request for increased inter-agency collaboration.

Advisory Committee for a Resilient Nevada (ACRN)

2021 SB390 (NRS 433.712 – 433.744)

SB390 created the Fund for a Resilient Nevada to hold the State's opioid settlement proceeds and prescribes procedures for the use of the proceeds by statewide projects and/or to support crisis stabilizing agencies. The bill also called for the creation of the Advisory Committee for a Resilient Nevada (ACRN) to report recommendations to the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Governor, and various components of the state's Legislature. Per the statute, NOMHE along with the DHHS Director and the Attorney General is named as an appointing body. NOMHE is responsible with filling 6 of the 17-member board seats to ensure the composition reflects the diversity of the State and persons disproportionately impacted by opioid misuse. NOMHE also advised ACRN members on equity principles such as Choice Point Thinking – a strategy that requires decision makers to consciously ask questions at each major point of impact about the equitable outcomes their choices produce.

Improving Nevada's Public Health Infrastructure

2021 SB424 (NRS 223.950)

As of June 2022, NOMHE's Public Health Resource Officer has initiated reviewing the State's public health infrastructure factoring for needs at the consumer level with an emphasis on diverse and/or marginalized communities. The process involves identifying service delivery gaps to develop equity-focused, systemic recommendations to health systems and health determining sectors. Improvements will include, for example, more accessible and streamlined methods of information sharing. The Public Health Resource Officer is meeting regularly with her counterpart in the Governor's Office, service providing state agencies as well as external stakeholders. In addition, NOMHE's Officer is researching relevant funding opportunities to support recommendations.