Health Equity Advisory & Leadership (HEAL) Council Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the HEAL Council?
The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Health Equity Advisory and Leadership (HEAL) Council was created to provide guidance to the Commissioner of Health regarding strengthening and improving the health and wellness of communities most impacted by health inequities across the state. MDH research shows that communities most impacted by health inequities include communities of color, American Indians, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) populations, those impacted by inequities related to geography, and Minnesotans with disabilities.

What role will HEAL Council members have?
The MDH HEAL Council is not a governing board but serves to advise MDH and the commissioner. Members will be representatives of community groups or professional stakeholder organizations that can have an influence on the health of various populations. MDH will rely on the advisory council to provide forthright and constructive feedback on the strategic direction of both the Center for Health Equity (CHE) and MDH as a whole in regards to health equity. Goals will include examining short- and long-term MDH health equity strategies and priorities and ensuring that MDH interfaces successfully with communities most impacted by health inequities.

What duties will the HEAL Council have?
The HEAL Council will:

- Assist MDH in carrying out the efforts outlined in the Advancing Health Equity report (PDF) and MDH Strategic Plan (PDF) (2015-19), including advising on specific MDH policies and programs, providing ideas and input about potential budget and/or policy proposals, and recommending review of particular MDH policies that create or perpetuate health inequities.
- Assist MDH in developing meaningful performance measures related to advancing health equity.
- At times, create smaller work groups within the HEAL Council to address particular issues. Workgroups will have clear tasks and guidelines and standardized parameters.
- By February 15, 2019, and annually thereafter, the HEAL Council will prepare and submit a report to the commissioner that summarizes the activities of the advisory council. The report will also describe specific objectives that the group will pursue during the next year.

Who will comprise the council?
The HEAL Council will consist of members who are representative of communities most impacted by health inequities across the state of MN, including: Racial and ethnic minority groups including populations of color (Black/African American, Asian American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, Arab American); refugees and immigrants; American Indians which may represent tribes, rural and/or urban areas; LGBTQ community members; Rural Minnesotans; Minnesotans with disabilities; Culturally and linguistically specific groups or service providers; Members of faith communities; or any other group the commissioner deems appropriate to facilitate the goals and duties of the council, including designated MDH staff.
Members should:

- Represent a community, organization/group, network or coalition that works to advance the health of those most impacted by health inequities in the state of MN. This could be a formal or informal group. This could include those working on social determinants of health such as housing, transportation, education, etc.;
- Be accountable to the communities and/or organizations that they represent (via reporting back, soliciting feedback, etc...);
- Be able to articulate needs and issues with respect to advancing health, racial equity, and equity at its many intersections (which may include economic justice, disability justice, gender justice, etc...); and
- Be able to bring forth opportunities and resources on behalf of their respective communities.

How many members will there be?
The HEAL Council will have no fewer than 15 and no more than 25 members appointed by the commissioner. In making appointments, the commissioner will work to ensure that the advisory body has representation from each of the communities represented by Minnesota’s legislative councils of color/Indian Affairs and Minnesotans with disabilities.

What will the HEAL Council application & selection process be?
The application is a two-part process. You MUST complete both parts to be considered.

- **Part 1:** Interested applicants must complete an electronic application through the Minnesota Secretary of State’s (MNSOS) Boards and Commissions Open Positions portal. MNSOS applications will be open until **Wednesday, September 20, 2017.**
- **Part 2:** Upon receipt of the Secretary of State’s application, MDH will email a supplemental application form (Word file) to the email address listed on the MNSOS application. This supplemental MDH application must also be completed to be considered. The deadline to submit MDH supplemental application is **Wednesday, September 27, 2017.**
- Once the application deadline has passed, a review committee comprised of MDH staff and external reviewers will review, rank and recommend candidates to the Commissioner of Health. The Commissioner of Health will make final decisions and appointments to the HEAL Council. Appointments will be made within 3 weeks of the close of the application process.

How long will the terms of service on the council be?
Members may serve up to two consecutive, 2-year terms.

When will HEAL Council meetings take place?
The HEAL Council will meet every other month (a minimum of 6 times annually) for the first year. Meeting frequency may be adjusted as needed after the first year. Meetings will likely take place during work hours 9 a.m.-5 p.m. for a duration of 3 hours.

Where will meetings take place?
To be determined based on the geographic composition of the group. Likely in the metro area in an accessible location.

Will council members be reimbursed for travel or receive stipends?
HEAL Council members will be reimbursed for mileage traveled to and from meetings, parking expenses and childcare expenses incurred as a result of attending HEAL Council meetings. Some additional travel
expense reimbursement (lodging, etc...) may be reimbursed on a case by case basis. Stipends are not available for council members.

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To obtain this information in a different format, call the MDH Office of Inclusion at 651-201-4089 or 651-201-4175 or email james.baertlein@state.mn.us.