

## Maternal and Child Health Advisory Task Force Meeting Summary

**Friday, June 12, 2020**

**Members Present:**

Carolyn Allshouse  
Diane Banigo  
Bryn Basri  
Paige Andersen Bowen  
Tricia Brisbine  
Maisha Giles  
Pat Lang  
Janet Morales  
Eugene Nicols  
Michelle O'Brien  
Deb Purfeerst  
Chera Sevcik  
Jamie Stang  
Nancy Hoyt Taff  
Megan Waltz

**Members Absent:**

Jane Auger  
Ken Bence  
Bonnie Fairbanks  
Stephanie Graves  
Carol Grady  
Andrea Mac Arthur  
Tamiko Ralston  
Jamie Slaughter-Acey  
Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro  
Jayne Whiteford

**MDH Staff:**

Joan Brandt  
Nicole Brown  
Deb Burns  
Sarah Dunne  
Judy Edwards  
Karen Fogg  
Katie Linde  
Dawn Reckinger  
Lynn Thompson

**Guests:**

Erin Bailey

### Welcome, Introductions and Chair Remarks

Chair Michelle O'Brien welcomed members and guests. She asked current members to introduce themselves and state their roles on the task force.

### Child and Family Health Division Updates

The Child and Family Health Division Update was provided in the meeting materials.

### Family Voices Survey Regarding COVID-19 Impact on CYSHN Populations and their Families

Carolyn Allshouse and Tricia Brisbine presented on their organization's electronic survey of families raising children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) to learn how COVID has affected families. The survey was administered from April 15 to May 1 and included both open and closed-ended questions related to the families demographics, use of service prior to COVID-19, how their services has been impacted and other family concerns about COVID-19 such as their child's education and family insurance. Survey results found that these families and children were adversely affected by COVID-19 and some of their main concerns were financial, lack of access to health care, fear of contracting COVID-19 and mental health for themselves and their children. Also noted was increased in use of services that included county services, telehealth/virtual services and mental health services.

## **Governor's Children's Cabinet Response to COVID-19 Pandemic**

Erin Bailey, Assistant Commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget presented on the background and purpose of the Children's Cabinet, a group comprised of 10 state agencies named in statute plus 12 additional state agencies. Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan co-chairs this group. She also discussed fiscal mapping, children's health and aligning data. There are five priority areas the Cabinet is focusing on to make MN the best state for children to grow up: healthy beginnings, child care and education, mental health and well-being, housing stability, and educational opportunity. Ms. Bailey also provided updates on the Action Team as well as the COVID-19 response workgroups.

## **Response and Impact of COVID-19 in Rural Communities**

Chera Sevcik, Human Services of Faribault and Martin Counties, presented on the COVID-19 impacts on rural communities. She discussed some of the challenges, some of which are MCH staff being reallocated to COVID-19 response and department staff/client technology issues. She also mentioned the county's accreditation process being postponed. She highlighted positive outcomes such as increased billing for tele-visits which has increased revenue.

## **Minnesota Department of Health Updates – COVID Response**

Acting Assistant Commissioner Deb Burns discussed MDH's response to COVID. She noted that 60% of MDH staff have been involved in the response. COVID testing has been expanded due to the actions of the State Emergency Operations Center and the Incident Command Center. Contact investigation is being done on a large scale. There are several counties that have outbreaks in rural Minnesota, such as Mower County.

## **2020-2022 Task Force Work Plan**

Michelle stated the Task Force needs to focus on tasks listed on the first page of the work plan (Commissioner's Report, review Adolescent Health Plan, Infant Mortality Reduction, Health Equity in Maternal Outcomes and Early Childhood). Gene stated the task force should recognize the COVID-19 pandemic in some way and suggested adding a task around coordinating with MDH on current or future pandemics to the work plan. Joan agreed and stated there are lots of lessons learned in this case. Michelle suggested the task force meet more frequently and create subgroups to complete specific work plan tasks and convening a meeting to determine direction and specific actions for the subgroups. Other suggestions regarding COVID's impact on families included getting input from MDH's home visitors, determining different needs, and possibly having virtual listening sessions with people in communities.

## **Member News and Issues**

Chera shared her organization is trying to get back to a sense of normalcy. They hosted a virtual *Bridges Out of Poverty* training that was excellent.

Nancy Taff mentioned the importance of drive-up vaccines.