

Maryland Commission on LGBTQ Affairs
Health & Wellness Committee
July 19, 2023, 5-6:30pm
Zoom

Minutes

Members Present:

Mickey Dhir, Chair
Nicholas Augustine, Vice Chair
Lee Blinder
Anthony Fox

Staff Present:

Jeremy Browning, Administrative Director

- I. Meeting called to order by Committee Chair Dhir at 5:02pm.
- II. Roll call completed and all members present.
- III. Acknowledgement of Meeting Guidelines.
- IV. Approval of Minutes from 4.12.2023: A motion was made by Commissioner Augustine to accept the minutes with corrections and was seconded by Commissioner Fox. Motion carried with all in favor.
- V. Old Business
 - A. Policy Priorities
 1. PrEP Access [SB064](#) - did not pass the 2023 legislative session. Review of notes from the previous meeting followed by a robust discussion:
 - a) Tension between pharmacists and providers over ability for pharmacists to give appropriate counseling remains a concern.
 - b) In the bill, pharmacists would prescribe a 30 day supply, but there lacks a clear pathway for patients to find a provider. Patient information could be transferred to providers with follow-up.
 - c) Pharmacies are in every neighborhood and offer another touchpoint and has potential to increase opportunities to reach at risk people and expand PrEP access.
 - d) Using pharmacists may not be the best use of resources, especially if patients only take a few pills and then stop.
 - e) Education is needed for people to understand the need for PrEP and pharmacists don't have the time to discuss sexual health.
 - f) Pharmacists need additional training, including how to be affirming to transgender and nonbinary patients to prevent mis-gendering.

- g) True access should include access to any form of PrEP the patient needs. New forms of prevention are coming soon, including a 6 month shot.
 - h) Pushback from insurance companies over cost is expected. Focus on cost savings of preventative care.
 - i) There's a disconnect on how the bill got here and not in touch with activists. Outreach and engagement with all stakeholders is needed.
 - j) Need discussions with stakeholders and providers.
 - k) More research and data is needed. Look at what has been published in other states.
 - (1) What is their metric of success?
 - (2) How is success determined - medical vs. community?
 - (3) Dispensing meds?
 - (4) Lower HIV infections?
 - l) Make sure we have all the information and consider that Maryland is not like other states. People in Maryland live, work, and play from Atlanta to New York City.
 - m) Request a meeting with Senator Lam.
2. Access to Mental Healthcare. Review of notes from the previous meeting followed by discussion:
- a) Very challenging to find gender-affirming care on some Medicaid plans.
 - b) Medicaid requires extra documentation and reimbursement rates are minimal.
 - c) Work with psychological associations and tap into their committees to remove barriers to providers:
 - (1) Maryland Counseling Association
 - (2) Maryland Social Work Association
 - (3) Maryland Psychological Association
 - (4) American Psychological Association
3. Trans youth without supportive adults. Review of notes from the previous meeting followed by discussion:
- a) Youth without supportive adults don't have champions.
 - b) There are youth in Maryland that can't access care.
 - c) Anti-LGBTQ and Anti-trans groups are well organized and funded against so called "gender-ideology"
 - d) Severe barriers to legislation at this time.
 - e) Attempts were made to include gender-affirming care to Minor consent laws for PrEP/PEP passed in 2019, but social workers supporting the bill were unaware of transgender people.
 - f) Opportunity for Commission to publish brief that reports facts/data and includes storytelling.

B. Best Practices

1. Minimal discussion due to time constraints.
 2. Opportunity to make recommendations in the 2023 Annual Report or publish briefs or white papers.
 3. Recommend a Trans Care Navigator
 4. Recommend LGBTQIA+ liaisons
 - a) Stress importance of gender and racial diversity
 - b) Variety of lived experiences is important
- C. Outreach and Community Engagement
1. Short discussion due to time constraints.
 2. Engage with LGBTQ+ liaisons from state and local governments
 - a) Baltimore City
 - b) Prince George's County
 - c) Montgomery County
 - d) Howard County Public Schools
 - e) Annapolis
 - f) Anne Arundel County
 - g) DPSCS
 - h) Law enforcement agencies

VI. New Business

- A. July 29th Meeting & Retreat - Administrative director gave an update on the upcoming meeting.
- B. Noted that Maryland Department of Health established a relationship with the Trevor Project to provide counseling. Recommended to discuss more at the next meeting. [Read the press release here.](#)

- VII. Adjourn: Commissioner Dhir made a motion to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Commissioner Blinder. Motion carried with all in favor and the meeting adjourned at 6:32pm.

Meeting minutes submitted by: Jeremy Browning