

**Maryland Advisory Council on Health and Wellness**  
**Special Meeting - Preventive Health and Health Services (PHHS) Block Grant**  
**Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**FY22 Workplan and Budget Review and Approval**  
**Minutes**  
**May 31, 2022**  
**4:00 - 5:00 PM**

The Maryland State Advisory Council on Health and Wellness, as the Maryland PHHS Advisory Committee, held a public meeting on 5/31/2022, beginning at 4:00 P.M.

**Members Present**

Salliann Alborn  
Mary Backley  
Crystal Bell  
Mary Pat Bertacchi  
Felicia Brannon  
Jonathan Dayton  
Jennifer Eastman  
Mychelle Farmer, M.D.  
Gary Gerstenblith, M.D.  
Darryl Heggans  
Jessica Kiel  
Namisa Kramer  
Julie Maneen  
Seth Martin, M.D.  
Jared Meacham  
Aruna Nathan, M.D.  
Rachel Pigott  
Cameron Pollock  
Vivienne Rose, M.D.  
Sara Vazer, M.D.  
Kristin Watson, Pharm.D.  
Pamela Williams  
Vanina Wolf

Pamela Xenakis

**Members Not Present**

Katie Hall  
Roger Harrel  
Vaple Robinson, Ph.D.  
Jason Semanoff  
Afton Thomas, D.O.  
Teresa Titus-Howard, Ph.D.

**MDH Staff Present**

Olubukola Alonge  
Kathleen Graham  
Christine Lord  
Kristi Pier  
Jennifer Schindler

**Members of the Public Present**

None

**I. Open Maryland Advisory Council on Health and Wellness**

Jessica Kiel, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

**II. Welcome and Business**

Welcome and Agenda Review: Ms. Kiel reviewed the meeting agenda.

Roll Call: Kristi Pier took roll call. A quorum was present.

**III. Open Preventive Health and Health Services (PHHS) Block Grant Advisory Committee Meeting**

Ms. Pier opened the meeting at 4:05pm, and reviewed the meeting agenda.

#### IV. **Overview of PHHS Block Grant FY2022 Workplan and Budget**

Olubuloka Alonge, MDH, provided an overview of the role of the Health and Wellness Council in the PHHS Block Grant, described the funding objectives and allocations for FY2022, and the activities for FY 2022 (see presentation).

##### Questions and Comments from the Committee Members:

*Dr. Gerstenblith* asked if there is funding to collect data on individuals' changes in health, such as smoking status decreases in BMI (body mass index), blood pressure control over time (e.g., after 6 months, etc.). *Ms. Pier* responded the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) collects prevalence on these data indicators; BRFSS is partially funded by PHHS.

*Dr. Gerstenblith* asked if there is an association with the YMCA to refer people to their facilities and resources. *Ms. Alonge* responded the funding provided will hopefully allow recipients to form local partnerships with organizations like the YMCA. *Ms. Pier* added that we aim to make requests for proposals accessible for community-based organizations to respond. *Dr. Gerstenblith* followed up to ask if the funding could pay for memberships. *Ms. Pier* responded that the budget is limited and generally goes toward supporting system-level changes that remain after the funding is gone.

Several committee members, including *Dr. Vazer*, *Dr. Farmer*, and *Dr. Nathan* requested that additional detail on each project be provided to the members, both written and presented. *Dr. Vazer* suggested the Council be provided more detail in the individual committee meetings before voting on these at this level (the full PHHS Block Grant) in the future, to allow more time to go into detail on individual projects of interest to each committee. It would also be helpful to receive more frequent updates to gauge status that would then inform more meaningful feedback when voting on the workplan and budget. *Ms. Kiel* and *Ms. Pier* acknowledged the requests for additional details and noted Council agendas since January 2021 have included at least one presentation from PHHS funded given the out, given the large number of projects, it would be difficult to touch on the status of each one in great detail. *Ms. Pier* noted the congressional intent of PHHS is to allow states to fill gaps in public health programs and services, depending on the needs of the state.

*Ms. Pigott* commented on the opportunities to reinvent our health messaging to help improve awareness of some of the initiatives supported by the PHHS Block Grant. *Ms. Pigott* asked how the health system will be chosen for the Cancer Death Objective project. *Ms. Alonge* responded the health system would be chosen through a competitive process. *Ms. Pigott* also asked who is invited to participate in the Walkability Virtual Academy and how the program is promoted. *Ms. Alonge* noted that requests for applications will be sent to local health departments who partner with the department of transportation and an elected official. *Ms. Pier* added that we will share via Basecamp when RFPs involving cross-sectional partnerships are posted.

Dr. Vazer asked if any funding will go to marijuana use and behavioral disorders, especially marijuana-induced psychosis. Ms. Pier responded she will reach out to the marijuana commission to seek additional information on this topic, and will provide more information at a later meeting.

Consideration/Approval of the PHHS Block Grant FY2022 Workplan and Budget:

Ms. Pier called for a vote to approve the Maryland PHHS FY22 Workplan and Budget. Dr. Gerstenblith made a motion to vote; Dr. Nathan seconded the motion. Ms. Pier recorded each member's approval of the workplan and budget; the workplan and budget received 23 votes to approve (23 of 31 members present, which constituted a quorum).

**V. Closing of (PHHS) Block Grant Advisory Committee Meeting**

Ms. Pier closed the Advisory Committee meeting at 4:45pm and the committee returned to the Council meeting.

**VI. Public Comment**

Ms. Kiel reopened the Council meeting at 4:45pm for public comments; no member of the public provided comment.

**VII. New FDA Rules on Mentholated Tobacco Products**

Dana Moncreif and Alexandra Nowalk from MDH's Center for Tobacco Prevention and Control provided information on the new rules the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) introduced on mentholated cigarettes and menthol flavor in cigars. Ms. Moncreif described the proposed rules and Ms. Nowalk provided additional background information. The open comment period to provide feedback to the FDA is open until July 5, 2022. The Council expressed interest in submitting a comment (individuals may also submit comments). Ms. Pier set a special meeting for the Council to review the suggested language and vote as to whether to submit a comment (June 28, 9-9:30am). Materials will be sent to members before the June 28th meeting.

**VIII. Adjournment**

Ms. Kiel adjourned the meeting at 5:01pm.