

# Health Disparities Advisory Meeting | MINUTES

January 18, 2024, | 1:00 P.M. – 2:00 P.M. | Location: Microsoft Teams

Meeting called by:	Division of Health Disparities Elimination	Approximately: 48 ppl.
Type of meeting:	Weekly Health Disparities Task Force –	
Facilitator:	LaShan Dixon, Director Office of Faith-Based and Community Engagement	

**Motivational Quote:** (LaShan Dixon) “In order to reverse the maternal health crisis for black women in the U.S., we need concrete policies from our leaders and better protocols from hospitals.” – Patrisse Cullors

## (LaShan Dixon)

- **Maternal Health Awareness Day** is observed on January 23, 204 and its crisis in the U.S. is nothing short of catastrophic. We can all play a role in helping to reverse the course and improve outcomes, by supporting the American College Obstetricians and Gynecologist to raise awareness about how access to maternal health care is at risk in your state or community and how the lives, health, and safety of patients depend on stakeholders coming together to develop sound policy solutions and implement programs and initiatives to restore and protect access to care. Please join us on January 23, 2024, in discussing “Access in Crisis” using #MaternalHealthAwarenessDay on social media and stay tuned for additional resources from ACOG. If you would like more information, please go to our website at [www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org).
- **National Birth Defects Awareness & Prevention Month** this year's theme is: “EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS” This month and throughout the year, joined National Birth Defect Prevention Network to help raise awareness about birth defects. Our hope is to help improve the health of people living with these conditions and widen the available network of support. This is the time to shine a light on various efforts within the birth defects community that:
  - Promotes healthy pregnancies.
  - Highlight ways to reduce the risk of birth defects.
  - Share resources/support services available within communities across the nation.
  - Advocate for health for children and families living with birth defects their lifespan.

NBDPN fully acknowledges that not all birth defects can be prevented. They also know that there are certain behaviors before and during pregnancy that may be linked to increased risk for birth defects. NBDPN, strive to promote healthy choices that increase the chances of having a healthy pregnancy, and in turn, reduce the risks of pregnancy complications and/or birth defects.

- **Thyroid Awareness Month** serves as a timely reminder for all to actively promote a culture of health and well-being. Encouraging a proactive approach towards health that prioritizes both physical and mental wellness. This is

also a time to understand the importance of a well-functioning thyroid. The role of a thyroid is supporting our metabolism, it holds a profound connection to cognitive function and the overall energy levels we feel throughout the day. Thyroid imbalances can manifest in symptoms such as fatigue, restlessness, difficulty concentrating, and mood swings which may hinder our ability to function during daily activities or study. If you are experiencing unexplained symptoms, it may be beneficial to seek medical advice. Early detection and management of thyroid disorders can not only alleviate symptoms but can also contribute to an improvement in the quality of life.

- **International Quality of Life Month** is observed in January, a time that focuses on how a person can improve the quality of the life they are currently living. There is always something that you can add to your life to make it better, such as a daily walk, a workout plan, reading a few pages of a book every day, or simply giving up on bad habits such as excessive drinking or smoking. Say yes, this is the time you commit to improving your life, and the lives of those around you and aim high to achieve happiness in any way you can!!!

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## TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

**Focus:** Meeting the Need of Older People with Vision Loss in Tennessee

**Presenter:** Priscilla Rogers, PH. D.

**Summary:** Priscilla Rogers, PH. D, is a Special Advisor, through the American Foundation for the blind, assisting older people with vision loss in Tennessee. As for vision, some older people have normal vision while others vision suddenly weakens and their diagnosed as legally blind. Then there are those who always had issues with their vision, they are not necessarily blind or going blind, but they always had trouble with their vision since birth or childhood, such as reading a book or driving a car.

Below are several major causes of low vision such as:

- Macular Degeneration which affects central vision, color loss and difficulty reading
- Glaucoma affects the peripheral vision and causes colored rings on lights.
- Diabetic Retinopathy causes overall blurring, floaters, and cloudy vision.
- Untreated Cataracts, causes blurring and glare issues and
- Dementia affects vision overall

Due to the National Coalition Big Data Project, the state data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey in 2019, recognizes that Tennessee averages at 9% of vision impairment at the age of 65 and older. National Coalition on aging and vision also broke down vision impairment for all 95 counties and what they come to learn is 8.5% are men, 9.4% are females aged 65 and the highest percentage is 14.1% at the age of 80 years and above. As we tend to age, we subject to different forms of vision loss, such as scuba vision, occlusion vision and binocular vision.

As for health disparities in Tennessee the Hispanic population has the highest rate of vision loss due to diabetes. There are 9% whose blind and visionally impaired with income less than \$10,000. Those with chronic illness conditions and experiencing fair to poor health ailments are 59% of older people suffering with vision loss. The largest health disparity that needs to be addressed concerning vision is within the state of Tennessee the availability to optometrist and ophthalmologist, is low to none for families just to receive an eye exam. If you would like more information, you may contact Blind Services at 833.772.8347 by phone or contact Ms. Priscilla Rogers, by cell phone: 423.923.0466 and/or via email [progers@afb.org](mailto:progers@afb.org).

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**Member Comments:** Announcements and Upcoming Events

- Communal Healing (available in Spanish) in Memphis on Saturday, January 27, 2024 - [https://vumc365my.sharepoint.com/:i/r/personal/jadaeka\\_mazon\\_vumc\\_org/Documents/Pictures/Saved%20Pictures/communal%20healing%20blue.png?csf=1&web=1&e=sw6UXd](https://vumc365my.sharepoint.com/:i/r/personal/jadaeka_mazon_vumc_org/Documents/Pictures/Saved%20Pictures/communal%20healing%20blue.png?csf=1&web=1&e=sw6UXd)

- Tennessee Justice Center in Nashville is seeking to serve more WIC for families and children. Please complete the survey of Healthcare Providers about WIC - <https://redcap.vanderbilt.edu/surveys/?s=3FCHRWNF3RLKXKP8>
  - If you need more information, please visit our website at [www.healthdisparitiestn.com](http://www.healthdisparitiestn.com)
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**Resources mentioned during call:**

- Communal Healing (available in Spanish) in Memphis on Saturday, January 27, 2024 - [https://vumc365-my.sharepoint.com/:i:/r/personal/jadaeka\\_mazon\\_vumc\\_org/Documents/Pictures/Saved%20Pictures/communal%20healing%20blue.png?csf=1&web=1&e=sw6UXd](https://vumc365-my.sharepoint.com/:i:/r/personal/jadaeka_mazon_vumc_org/Documents/Pictures/Saved%20Pictures/communal%20healing%20blue.png?csf=1&web=1&e=sw6UXd)

**Chat Box – links / website / events:**

- Tennessee Justice Center in Nashville is seeking to serve more WIC for families and children. Please complete the survey of Healthcare Providers about WIC - <https://redcap.vanderbilt.edu/surveys/?s=3FCHRWNF3RLKXKP8>
  - If you need more information, please visit our website at [www.healthdisparitiestn.com](http://www.healthdisparitiestn.com)
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**Next Meeting: January 25, 2024, from 1pm-2pm via Microsoft Teams.**

**Microsoft Teams Meeting details are as follows:**

**Join on your computer or mobile app**

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

**Or call in (audio only)**

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Phone Conference ID: 641 975 577#