

# Health Disparities Advisory Meeting | MINUTES

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

Meeting called by:	Division of Health Disparities Elimination	Approximately: 65 ppl.
Type of meeting:	Weekly Health Disparities Advisory Group Meeting	
Facilitator:	LaShan Dixon, Director Office of Faith-Based and Community Engagement	

**Motivational Quote:** (LaShan Dixon) “Stress can affect your attitude, relationship, and health. Examine the personal and professional stress in your life and be proactive about reducing your stress levels.” – Smile More Today

**(LaShan Dixon)**

- **Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) Awareness Month** is a disorder that produces pain and discomfort in the abdomen, it usually starts in early adulthood, and it affects twice as many women as men. Approximately 20% of the population has IBS and no one knows what causes IBS. Some studies suggest that the nerves of the colon may be much more sensitive than usual in people with IBS. The normal movement of food and gas through the colon causes pain, intestinal spasms, and an irregular pattern of bowel movements. Below are a few factors that have been shown to play a role in (IBS) which are the following:
  - Severe infections such as gastroenteritis and bacterial colonization of the intestines.
  - Muscle contractions in the intestine that are unusually strong.
  - Abnormalities in the nervous system of the intestines.
  - Inflammation of the intestines.
  - Changes in gut microflora.

There is no specific test to diagnose IBS, only medical history, and physical examination such as x-rays, breathe test, stool test, lactose intolerance test etc. IBS cannot be cured, treatment is only aimed to relieve the symptoms which includes medication, nutrition, and specialist consultant.

- **Esophageal Cancer Awareness Month** is when tumors grow anywhere along the esophagus, the esophagus is muscular tube that helps move the food you swallow from the back of your throat to your stomach to be digested. Esophageal cancer usually begins in the cells that line the inside of the esophagus. More men than women get esophageal cancer, if this type of cancer is detected early, treatment may be effective, and the outlook is better. But most people do not receive a diagnosis until esophageal cancer is in the later stages. Signs and symptoms of esophageal cancer may include:
  - Difficulty swallowing (dysphagia).

- Weight loss without trying.
- Chest pain, pressure or burning.
- Worsening indigestion or heartburn.
- Coughing or hoarseness.

Esophageal cancer is the sixth most common cause of cancer deaths worldwide. In some regions, higher rates of esophageal cancer may be attributed to tobacco and alcohol use or nutritional habits and obesity. Here are a few tests and procedures used to diagnose esophageal cancer include:

- Barium swallow study. During this study, you swallow a liquid that includes barium and then undergo X-rays. The barium coats the inside of your esophagus, which then shows any changes to the tissue on the X-ray.
- Using a scope to examine your esophagus (endoscopy). During endoscopy, your doctor passes a flexible tube equipped with a video lens (videoendoscopic) down your throat and into your esophagus. Using the endoscope, your doctor examines your esophagus, looking for cancer or areas of irritation.
- Collecting a sample of tissue for testing (biopsy). Your doctor may use a special scope passed down your throat into your esophagus (endoscope) to collect a sample of suspicious tissue (biopsy). The tissue sample is sent to a laboratory to look for cancer cells.

Once a diagnosis of esophageal cancer is confirmed, your doctor may recommend additional tests to determine whether the cancer has spread to your lymph nodes or to other areas of your body. Treatments you receive for esophageal cancer are based on the type of cells involved in the cancer, cancer's stage, your overall health, and preferences for treatment such as surgery to remove very small tumors, surgery to remove a portion of the esophagus called (esophagectomy), surgery to remove a portion of the esophagus and upper portion of your stomach which is called (esophagogastromy). Other treatments may include chemotherapy and radiation, combined chemo and radiation, targeted drug therapy and immunotherapy.

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## TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

**Focus:** Tri-Synergy Counseling

**Presenter:** Victoria Valdez, Founder & Operational Director

**Summary:** Tri-Synergy Counseling is a new counseling practice that opened last year in Brentwood, TN. Ms. Victoria Valdez is the Founder and Operational Director of Tri-Synergy Counseling, she and her team seeks to meet the needs of children, teens, parents, families with individual and community counseling. Tri-Synergy, team members is educated, diverse and represents the entire community, they have a licensed therapist, pre-licensed therapists and a few mental health therapists in training and their working to build a bridge between the gap of mental health and community.

Tri-Synergy Counseling has a variety of therapies such as child therapy, couples therapy, family therapy, parent-child therapy, and community partnership just to name a few. They also offer Immigration Psychological Evaluations but only Ms. Valdez is trained to conduct this group. A therapist can be found in Williamson County called Eli House, where mothers and children are housed due to trauma and homelessness. Tri-Synergy partners with other organizations such as TPOM and My Baby4Me with none to excellent affordable therapy sessions. If anyone is interest in receiving further information about Tri-Synergy Counseling, please contact Ms. Victoria Valdez by via email at [victoria@tri-synergycounselingtn.com](mailto:victoria@tri-synergycounselingtn.com).

**Member Comments:** Announcements and Upcoming Events

- Community of Practice
    - Middle: Thursday, April 25, in Lebanon
    - East: Thursday, May 2, in Knoxville
  - [Rural Health Association of Tennessee 2024 Spring Regional Events](#) April 23, Middle TN Regional Event at Fall Creek Falls
  - [Rural Health Association of Tennessee - Health for All: A Language Inclusion Webinar](#) – April 25, Domestic Violence Survivors Presentation.
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**Resources mentioned during call:**

- **[TPHA Division Meetings](#)**
  - Middle Tennessee Grand Division Meeting is Friday, April 19, 2024, at Gallatin Civic Center in Gallatin, Tennessee
  - West Tennessee Grand Division Meeting is Friday, April 26, 2024, at Jackson-Madison County Regional Health Department
- **Raleigh Community Health Fair**
  - The 5th Annual Community Health Wellness and Safety Resource Fair hosted by LF Mobile Lifesaving Courses will commence Saturday June 1st from 11a-2p at the Raleigh Springs Civic Center 3384 Austin Peay, Memphis, TN
- **Juneteenth Festival**
  - Information will be posted soon. ManifestMagicBGC will have a community resource space and a health and wellness space to provide resources and onsite care for attendees held on June 19th in Clarksville TN. Music, food, art, literature, vendors to shop with will be made available. If you need more information, please email [juanita@manifestmagicbgc.org](mailto:juanita@manifestmagicbgc.org) or go to our website and at [ManifestMagicBGC.org/Juneteenth](http://ManifestMagicBGC.org/Juneteenth).
- If you need more information, please visit our website at [www.healthdisparitiestn.com](http://www.healthdisparitiestn.com)

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

Training Community Clinicians to Enhance Quality Care for Adults with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities - May – Oct 2024

- People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) experience health disparities, earlier mortality, and a higher prevalence of chronic medical and psychiatric conditions. While multiple factors affect these disparities, access to well-trained clinicians is beneficial in reducing some of these disparities. This project, funded by Wellpoint, seeks to support clinicians providing care for adults with I/DD by providing training specific to I/DD and improving patient outcomes and satisfaction.

Experienced clinicians in I/DD at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville and nationally have joined forces to develop an ECHO I/DD training program. ECHO stands for Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes, and the model is being used worldwide to provide training in more than 50 medical conditions. It is structured as live video-conferencing sessions, consisting of a didactic, case presentation, a question/answer session, and general discussion, that specifically designed to foster an all-teach/all-learn environment.

We are seeking physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and billing mental health professionals who

accept Wellpoint Medicaid insurance and who care for adults with IDD to participate in video-conferencing sessions. These sessions will meet for an hour twice a month, for six months, starting May 9, 2024. Participants will be compensated, and the sessions will also count for CME.

During the sessions, topics will include:

- Supporting adults with IDD in clinic.
- Managing co-occurring medical conditions.
- Managing co-occurring psychiatric conditions.
- Housing and community support.
- Supporting families/caregivers.
- Post-secondary education and employment and more.

Dr. Beth Malow is the Vanderbilt Site Director, for more information or to sign up please contact:  
[projectECHO@VUMC.org](mailto:projectECHO@VUMC.org)

- If you need more information, please visit our website at [www.healthdisparitiestn.com](http://www.healthdisparitiestn.com)
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**Next Meeting: April 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)**

[+1 629-209-4396, 641975577#](tel:+16292094396) United States, Nashville  
Phone Conference ID: 641 975 577#