

Health Equity Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: November 5, 2025

Attendees: Mark Hughes, Kirsten Murphy, Ken Russell, Sarah Launderville, Kate Jerman, Song Nguyen, Katie Stetler, Kheya Ganguly, Melaina Bassette, Xusana Davis

Agenda item	Notes
Check-in <i>15 mins</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in prompt: Today was interesting because...
Annual Report <i>10 mins</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kirsten offered to draft the report based on this outline. • Proposed timeline for completion (due 1/15/26) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 12/3/25: Kirsten completes initial draft ○ 12/17/25: Executive Committee submits edits/comments ○ 1/7/26: Full HEAC submits edits ○ 1/15/26: Submit to legislature
Discussion with State Office of Health Equity Director <i>30 mins</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Themes from Kate’s 1:1 discussions with HEAC members. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engagement of community partners (or lack thereof) ○ Structure/logistics of participating ○ HEAC purpose and focus for action • Positives and kudos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We still get to do this work, maintaining focus on health equity ○ Gratitude for Mark and Kirsten’s leadership and everyone who makes time to participate ○ Pride in establishing SOHE and getting the position filled. • Challenges and concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of community representation/participation ○ Unclear purpose/focus of the HEAC. ○ These challenges pair with belief that this was a moment of change and possibility for HEAC to set a new course.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussed among the group what stood out to each of us in the themes Kate shared, e.g., how to accommodate schedules of different members; meetings might not be accessible to people with disabilities; legislative hurdles and necessary buy in. • What is most critical to address? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engagement of community partners in shaping the focus for action. Take stock of who can be here, what support they need to attend meetings. ○ Lots of work that needs to be done as part of our purpose, how do we prioritize actions we can take first. • Discussed whether the HEAC wants to solely be advisory to SOHE or also have independent projects that it leads. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There are responsibilities in the enabling statute beyond advising SOHE. However, the scope is very broad and hard for one entity to do. ○ How can we be responsive to changes in health equity landscape since the statute was written, e.g., impact on SNAP benefits and insurance coverage. ○ Need structure to be able to address health equity questions/issues that come up (e.g., did not have a clear process to provide input on the flavored tobacco bill a couple of years ago). ○ Go back to workplan to see if there are resources to create guardrails around what we do. ○ Consider what we as a Commission want to hand over to SOHE to lead. • Next steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kate: continue talking to members who are inactive and how to bring their voices into the conversation and decision-making. ○ Executive Committee: discuss next steps from this conversation.
<p>HEAC Appointments and Co-Chairs</p> <p><i>30 mins</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah Launderville will be the new chair. Thanks, Sarah! Mark Hughes will continue to offer co-chair support until another person is identified for this role.
<p>Review work plan</p>	<p>Did not discuss.</p>

<i>10 mins</i>	
Announcements <i>5 mins</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of Racial Equity annual conference 11/3 and 11/4 • Human Rights Summit 11/14 and 1/15, VT State University, Randolph • Vermont (and all states) preparing application for the federal Rural Health Transformation Grant.
Action items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kirsten: draft the 2026 annual report. • Kate: continue talking to members who are inactive and how to bring their voices into the conversation and decision-making.