

# NC Minority Health Advisory Council Quarterly Meeting

Office of Minority Health & Health  
Disparities (OMHHD)

June 17, 2025



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**



# Welcome and Member Roll Call

**Luis Garcia Abundis**  
**Data and Evaluation Program Manager**



# Meeting Agenda

## 1. Welcome

## 2. Medicaid Updates

- LaQuana Palmer, Deputy Director  
Communications and Engagement

## 3. Office of Minority Health Updates

- Portia Pope, PhD, Office of Minority Health  
Updates
- Tatiana Moore, Minority Diabetes Prevention  
Program Manager

## 4. Health Portfolio Updates

- Debra Farrington, Deputy Secretary

## 5. Questions / Closing Remarks

# Meeting Objectives

1. **Enable MHAC members to better understand how NCDHHS and OMHHD function to eliminate health disparities and serve the people of NC.**
2. **Leverage the expertise of MHAC members to inform and support NCDHHS priorities related to addressing health disparities and provide a call to action for member involvement, feedback, and input.**

# Communication Considerations



**Use the chat to ask questions.** A meeting facilitator will read your question aloud to the group if there is time after each presentation section. Or, if there is not time, there is a dedicated discussion time reserved at the end.



**Use the chat to provide insight or ideas during the presentation.** All feedback and comments are welcome as the speakers present.



There is a dedicated **floor discussion** time later in this meeting.



If you come off mute to speak, please **state your name and affiliation** for the group before sharing.

# Communications & Engagement Updates

**LaQuana Palmer, MPA**  
**Division of Health Benefits (NC Medicaid)**  
**Deputy Director, Communications and Engagement**

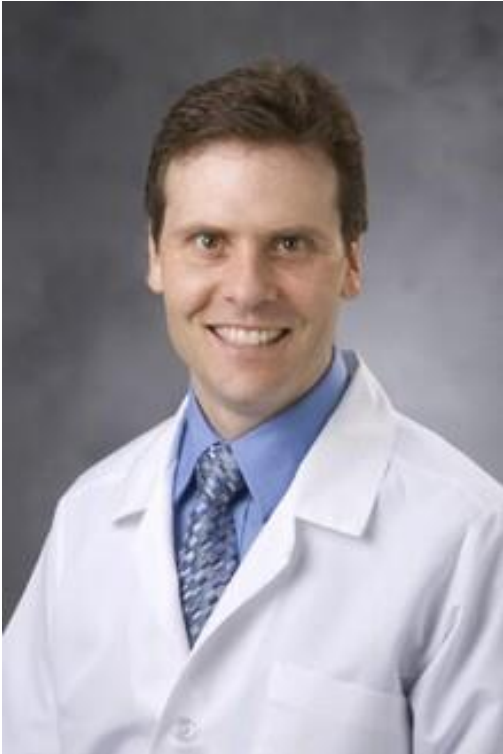


# Office of Minority Health Updates

**Portia D. Pope, Ph.D., MPA, PMP, LSSGB, NCCM, IMH-E**  
**Acting Director, Office of Minority Health and Community Engagement**



# New NCDHHS State Health Director



**Lawrence H.  
Greenblatt, MD**

- Dr. Lawrence Greenblatt was appointed as State Health Director and Chief Medical Officer for NCDHHS and began his duties on Monday, June 2
- He brings over 30 years of experience as a general internist, educator, and leader in Medicaid policy at Duke University Health System, where he spearheaded efforts to integrate behavioral health and addiction services into primary care
- He launched one of the nation's first academic initiatives to promote safe opioid prescribing and expand treatment for opioid use disorder, and has co-led major initiatives like the Durham Crisis Collaborative to improve local mental health planning



**The Honorable CAPT Mahyar  
Mofidi, DMD, PhD, Director,  
Office of Minority Health**

## Core Priorities and Strategic Areas

1. Enhancing Data Collection and Analysis
2. Developing and Implementing Targeted Interventions
3. Promoting Language Access and Health Literacy
4. Strengthening the Health Workforce
5. Fostering Community Engagement and Partnerships
6. Advancing Research and Evaluation
7. Supporting Policy Development



## Make America Healthy Again (MAHA)

MAHA is a public health campaign launched in 2024, prominently featuring figures like Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Dr. Phil. The initiative emphasizes addressing chronic health issues, such as obesity, diabetes, and mental health disorders, by promoting preventive care, lifestyle changes. It also advocates for reducing pharmaceutical dependence and enhancing public health education.

1. Preventive care
2. Lifestyle changes
3. Chronic disease prevention

# Call to Action for MHAC Strategic Planning

**Preparing to Launch a Strategic planning process for the Office of Minority Health (OMH) this Fall, following the completion of the DHHS Strategic Plan in September**

## Why this matters:

- Align OMH priorities with DHHS goals and statewide health improvement efforts
- Ensure community voice and lived experience help shape OMH's direction
- Strengthen partnerships and shared ownership of OMH's process future work on MHAC do support:
  - ❖ Serve as a strategic thought partner during planning
  - ❖ Help identify emerging needs, priorities, and opportunities
  - ❖ Inform and validate proposed goals and strategies
  - ❖ Engage broader community networks in the planning process

## Next Steps:

- Strategic planning kickoff: Fall 2025 (after DHHS plan finalization)
- Invitation for MHAC members to participate in planning sessions
- Opportunities for input throughout the

## Call to action:

We invite MHAC members to actively engage in this important effort to help chart the future of the Office of Minority Health. Your voices and leadership are essential to shaping a strong, responsive, and community-centered plan.

# Strengthening Pathways to Access to Care

## Overview

Sessions aim to provide health navigation information to equip community health workers, faith institutions, and community organizations with the tools and information needed to help individuals navigate the different pathways that currently exist to access health coverage and services. The goal of the sessions is to increase access to primary care, preventive screenings and health care management services.

**Region 4:** April 24th, 2025 Special Focus: **Cancer Navigation**

*Chapel Hill*

**Region 6:** June 17th, 2025 Special Focus: **Oral Health**

*Greenville*

**Region 1:** July 17th, 2025 Special Focus: **Mental Health/Disability Services**

*Asheville*

**Region 2:** August 5th, 2025 Special Focus: **Cancer Navigation**

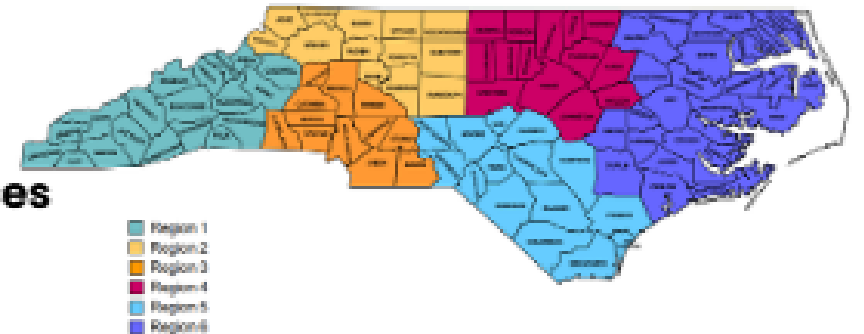
*Winston Salem*

**Region 5:** August 19th, 2025 Special Focus: **Diabetes**

*Wilmington*

**Region 3:** September 25th, 2025 Special Focus: **Disability Services**

*Charlotte*



"The Latinx and Hispanic community is 2.08 times more likely to not see a doctor due to cost."

# Strengthening Pathways Access to Care Region 4

- Informational Session for Region 4 took place on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at United Church of Chapel Hill and one taking place today, in Greenville.
- Thank you to our partners:
  - Care Share Health Alliance
  - North Carolina Justice Center
  - NC Navigator Consortium
  - Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina
  - Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist
  - North Carolina Community Health Center Association
  - NC Medicaid



# Strengthening Pathways Access to Care Region 6

## Partners for Region 6 Access to Care Training:

- East Carolina University School of Dental Medicine, Sonrie Clinic
- North Carolina Community Health Center Association
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of NC
- NC Navigator Consortium
- Care Share Health Alliance
- Legal Aid NC
- NCDHHS Medicaid

NCDHHS Office of Health Equity

The Latino Policy & Strategy Team in partnership with  
NC Community Health Center Association (NCCHCA) and  
Care Share Health Alliance Presents

## STRENGTHENING PATHWAYS TO ACCESS TO CARE

Region 6 Informational Session

JUNE 17, 2025

9:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Register now to join our  
informational session to  
gain valuable insights  
and engage with key  
partners working to  
improve access to care  
in North Carolina.

*The session will be hosted primarily in Spanish  
with simultaneous interpretation provided.*

For more information, contact  
Carolina Siliceo Perez at  
carolina.siliceoperez@dhhs.nc.gov



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## Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) Presentation

- On April 30<sup>th</sup> 2025, our office gave a presentation to Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina on our Health Disparities Analysis Report
- Over 200 people were in attendance at the meeting and learned about the impact our report has created for the health and well-being of all North Carolinians



# Welcome Polly!



**Polly-Gean Cox, MHA, MSW, LCSW  
Community and Partner Engagement  
Program Manager**

Polly-Gean Cox is a licensed clinical social worker with over 10 years of experience providing mental health services and promoting community wellness. She holds a Master of Health Administration from Pfeiffer University and a Master of Social Work from the Joint MSW program at UNC Greensboro and North Carolina A&T State University. Her work centers on supporting underserved populations through culturally responsive, person-centered care.

Polly has worked in a variety of community-based settings, including hospitals, crisis teams, assisted living facilities, and outpatient clinics. She has supported individuals living with severe mental illness, trauma, and chronic health conditions, and has helped manage care for high-risk patients by coordinating with providers to address both social and cultural needs.

She is passionate about equity, mental health, and strengthening communities. Polly brings a unique blend of clinical expertise, cultural insight, and collaborative leadership to every role she serves.

# Awards and Recognition



Dr. Portia Pope was honored to receive the Cherly Boyce Leadership Award for her visionary leadership and transformative systems work through her groundbreaking leadership in implementing the Health Equity Framework across NCDHHS



Latinx Policy Strategy Program Manager Victoria Zampieri received the Distinguished Volunteer Service Award from the Duke Cancer Institute, Office of Community Outreach, Engagement and Equity for the cancer prevention work she has done with Duke Cancer Institute



Data and Evaluation Program Manager, Luis Garcia Abundis has been selected as a 2025 LatinxEd Fellow and accepted into the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy, Policy Innovation and Research Certificate Program



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
HARRIS SCHOOL  
OF PUBLIC POLICY

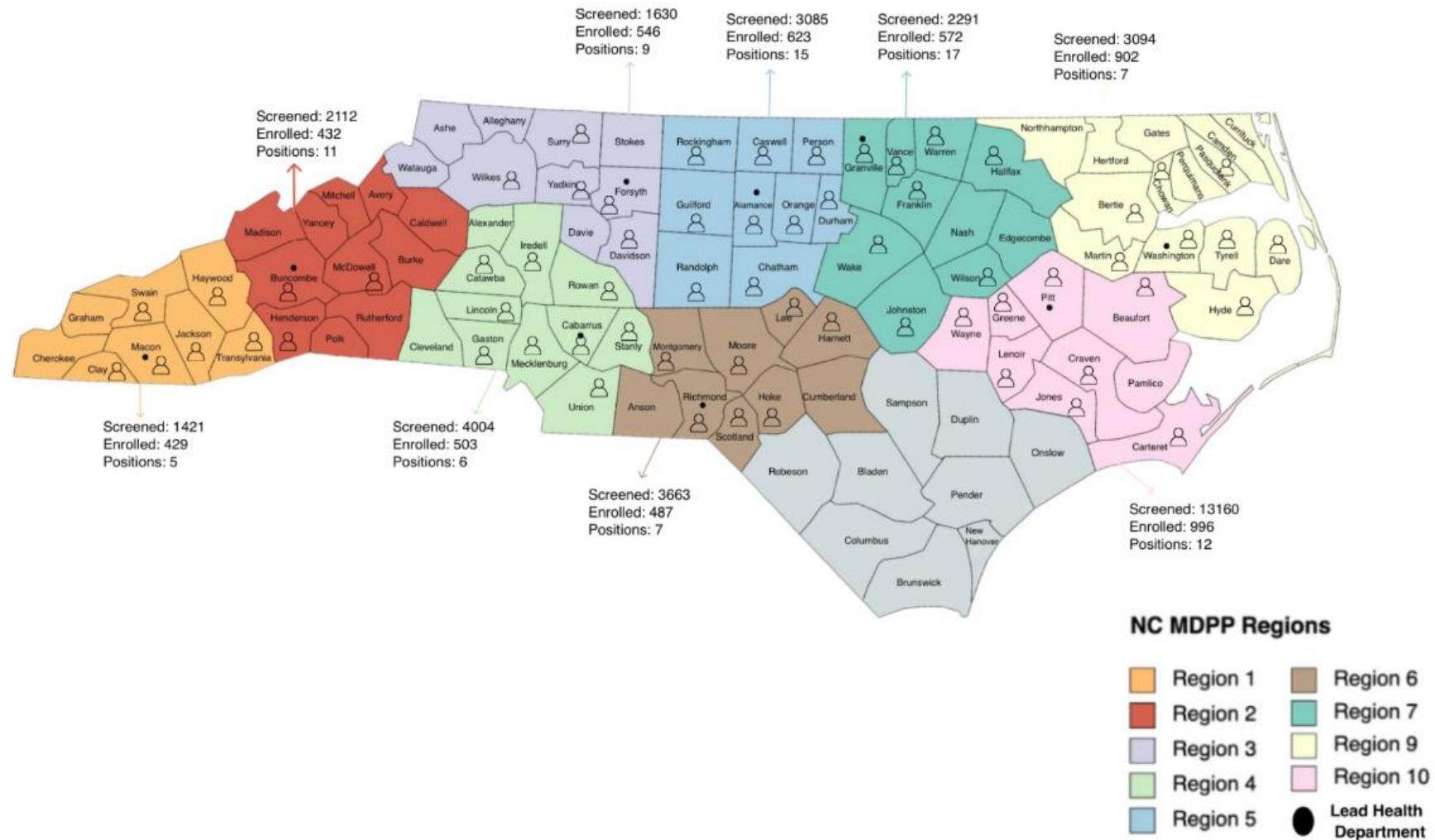
# Minority Diabetes Prevention Program (MDPP) Updates

**Tatiana Moore, MPH, RDN, LDN, IBCLC**

**NC Minority Diabetes Prevention Program (MDPP) Program Manager**



# County Representation and Impact Since 2017



# NC DHHS and Health Portfolio Updates

**Debra Farrington, MSW, LCSW**  
**NCDHHS Deputy Secretary for Health**



# Any Questions, Comments, or Feedback?

## Open Discussion



# Closing Remarks

## Contact Us:

- Office of Minority Health:
  - [HealthEquityOffice@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:HealthEquityOffice@dhhs.nc.gov)
- Dr. Portia Pope, Deputy Director, OHE:
  - [Portia.D.Pope@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Portia.D.Pope@dhhs.nc.gov)

## Resources:

- [Office of Health Website](#)
- [Health Portfolio Website](#)
- [Community & Partner Engagement \(CPE\) Website](#)
  - [CPE Resources Page](#)
- [MHAC Website](#)

## NC Minority Health Advisory Council Post-Session Survey (June 2025)



[Link to survey](#)

# *Thank you!*



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