

NCIOM/IMPH Carolinas Pandemic Preparedness Task Force

Meeting One Summary

July 19, 2021

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Virtual Meeting Conducted Over Zoom

Meeting Attendees

Co-chairs:

Harris Pastides, Machel Baker Sanders

Task Force Members: Arnold Aleir Martinez, Lori Byrd, Michelle Bucknor, Lenora Campbell, Sam Cohen, Christine Carr, Kimberly Clement, Jennifer Copeland, Robin Gary Cummings, Carla Cunningham, Melanie Davis, Merel Devaney, Tracy Doaks, Andy Ellen, Natalie English, Iris Green, Sara Goldsby, Deborah Hardison, Lynn Harvey, Tessa Hastings, Kameisha Heppard, Ivy Jones, Tecoria Jones, Sarah Hearn, Lin Hollowell, Erika Kirby, Michelle Laws, Ann Lefebvre, Kevin Leonard, Roy Lee Lindsey, Norma Martí, Kathleen Martin, Zack Moore, Sel Mpang, Connie Munn, Brad Owens, Jacob Parrish, Shannon Pointer, Omari Richins, Ken Rogers, Ben Rose, Tim Rosebrock, Emma Sandoe, Wayne Sasser, Rich Scott, Ivan Segura, Sym Singh, Windsor Westbrook Sherril, Kathy Schwarting, Janice Somers, Tim Spittle, Drew Stanley, Kim Stenson, Shawn Stinson, Vernon Stringer, Richele Taylor, Brannon Traxler, Robin Tutor-Marcom, Hugh Tilson, Leza Wainwright, Amy Widderich

Steering Committee Members: Angel Bourdon, Cardra Burns, Abdoulaye Diedhiou, Ellen Essick, Kelly Fuller, Emily Roach, Kathia Valverde

Speakers: Tom Allen, Kimberly Clement, Abdoulaye Diedhiou, Elizabeth Cuervo Tilson

Interested Colleagues/Guests: Steven Batson, Eunice Medina, Melissa Potter

NCIOM Staff: James Coleman, Kathy Colville, Brienne Lyda-McDonald, Alison Miller, Kaitlin Phillips, Michelle Ries

IMPH Staff: Brie Hunt, Maya Pack, Brittany Sanderson, Hunter Sox

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Harris Pastides, Ph.D., MPH, Interim President, University of South Carolina

Secretary of Commerce Machel Baker Sanders, MHA, North Carolina Department of Commerce

Task force co-chairs Dr. Harris Pastides and Secretary of Commerce Machel Baker Sanders welcomed the task force members to the first meeting and shared their thoughts on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as a call to action. Dr. Pastides and Secretary Sanders also recognized and expressed gratitude to the frontline essential workers who have risked their lives throughout the pandemic.

Task Force Overview

Kathy Colville, MSW, MSPH, President and CEO, North Carolina Institute of Medicine

Maya H. Pack, MS, MPA, Executive Director, South Carolina Institute of Medicine and Public Health

After the opening remarks from the co-chairs, Ms. Maya Pack and Ms. Kathy Colville provided an overview of the work of the task force. To start their overview, Ms. Colville and Ms. Pack talked about the mission and work of each institute and the goal of the task force to develop consensus-driven and actionable recommendations to strengthen future pandemic response and support timely, coordinated response efforts. During their overview, Ms. Pack and Ms. Colville also addressed the key areas/themes the task force will focus on, the role of the task force steering committee, and the task force's guiding principles.

Colville and Pack Presentation Link

North Carolina Emergency Management and Emergency Services Perspective

Kimberly Clement, MPH, Healthcare Preparedness Program Manager, Office of Emergency Medical Services, Division of Health Services Regulation, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Ms. Kimberly Clement provided an overview of North Carolina's emergency management response to COVID-19. Ms. Clement started by discussing the four sectors of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. She then described the structure of the NC Office of Emergency Medical Services. Ms. Clement then summarized the initial focus areas during the response, North Carolina's emergency management's coordinated efforts, and the coordination timeline. Coordination efforts included: scarce resource guidance, SERT guidance for first responders, medical surge planning, healthcare response coordination, PPE request processes, long-term care outbreak support, and data-driven response. Ms. Clement concluded by sharing best practices and lessons learned from the emergency management response to COVID-19.

Clement Presentation Link

South Carolina State Health Agency Perspective

Abdoulaye Diedhiou, MD, PhD, MS, Director, Acute Disease Epidemiology, Bureau of Communicable Disease Prevention and Control, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

Dr. Diedhiou discussed the impact of the coronavirus pandemic in South Carolina, including a graph of the reported cases and deaths up to mid-July 2021. The current high-risk group includes those who are not fully vaccinated who make up 94% of new cases, 90% of hospitalizations and 100% of deaths. He also discussed the impact that COVID-19 has had on racial and ethnic minority groups. Dr. Diedhiou described the conditions that predispose individuals to the greatest risk of infection, such as higher rates of chronic comorbid conditions, less access to paid time off and/or unsafe working conditions. Although African Americans constitute 27% of the population of South Carolina, they account for 45% of COVID-19 deaths. Up until age 60, the majority of coronavirus deaths occur among minority groups.

Dr. Diedhiou also talked about some of the challenges faced by long-term care facilities during the pandemic and the impact that vaccines have had on these facilities. He discusses lessons learned, including the impact of preparedness and the necessity to increase lab, data and IT capacity in public health. He also explained that we will need a much more robust communication plans for both protocol and data.

[Diedhiou Presentation](#)

North Carolina State Health Agency Perspective

Elizabeth Cuervo Tilson, MD, MPH, State Health Director & Chief Medical Officer, NC Department of Health and Human Services

Dr. Tilson provided an overview of the current status of North Carolina's response to COVID-19, the disproportionate impacts that the pandemic has had on vulnerable populations, pre-pandemic context that shaped the state's response, and lessons learned from the response. Dr. Tilson started off discussing the four key metrics that shaped the state's response to the COVID-19: the daily number of people currently hospitalized, emergency department visits, daily cases by dates reported, and positive tests. Overall, all four key metrics are low, but there has been a recent uptick. Dr. Tilson also mentioned that racial and ethnic disparities have been reduced but continue to persist. She then explained that COVID-19 cases related to the Delta variant are increasing in North Carolina and emphasized the importance of vaccination to prevent severe illness and death. Transmission of the virus is highest in counties with lower vaccination rates. Dr. Tilson then shared additional data on North Carolina's vaccination status and described statewide vaccination efforts. Dr. Tilson concluded by discussing the pre-pandemic context that informed the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and lessons learned from the response, including the importance of partnerships to support coordination.

[Tilson Presentation](#)

South Carolina Emergency Management and Emergency Services Perspective

Tom Allen, Director of Safety, Transportation and Emergency Response, SC Office of Regulatory Staff – Rural Broadband Grant Program

Mr. Allen began by describing the role, function, and responsibilities of the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) and the impact of COVID-19 around utility regulation and management. Mr. Allen then went into detail about the pipeline, railroad and transportation safety issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. He also discussed issues related to telecommunications, like the challenges the deaf and hard of hearing communities have faced during the pandemic. Mr. Allen then described the utility response/solution to issues during the pandemic and concluded by discussing the CARES Act Funding related to broadband access and how it is being used to support broadband infrastructure expansion in rural South Carolina.

[Allen Presentation](#)

Closing Remarks

Michelle G. Ries, MPH, Associate Director, North Carolina Institute of Medicine

Ms. Ries brought the meeting to a close by highlighting shared goals as the work of the task force moves forward and thanking everyone for their participation.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, August 18, 2021 from 12:00 pm – 3:30 pm (virtual meeting)

Meeting registration (deadline: **August 16, 2021**) linked [here](#).