

2021 Annual Report Social Determinants of Health Taskforce

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH TASKFORCE
FOR BALTIMORE CITY

Social Determinants of Health Taskforce for Baltimore City & Advisory Board

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COVID-19 caused havoc on the nation in 2020 and revealed social factor inequities for individuals across the U.S. –for this report, the focus was residents in Baltimore City. In 2021, those same COVID-19 related inequities carried over and were very much prevalent, if not more when the safeguards implemented in 2020 (i.e., eviction moratoriums, unemployment benefits) expired mid-year. Thus, the Social Determinant of Health Taskforce for Baltimore City (“the Taskforce”) engaged in activities that supported communities in Baltimore City plagued by the affects from the aftermath of the virus. More importantly, the Taskforce addressed the question “what can the Taskforce do to lessen the impacts?”.

The Taskforce and its five subcommittees are dedicated to addressing the social determinants of health. Hence, this report will briefly outline important activities in five key areas (i.e., social justice, housing, education, workforce development, and health and human services) that were undertaken by the Taskforce members to help Baltimore City residents address the overwhelming induced social determinants of health issues and concerns. Equally so, the Taskforce will share policy recommendations by subcommittees based on deep, trusting relationships with community members, organizations, and stakeholders.

As a taskforce, we had four (4) compelling lessons learned over the past year. These include the following:

1. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to shine a spotlight on well-known inequalities and opportunities for addressing social determinants of health in Baltimore City. Those communities and populations that have historically been most affected by social and economic inequalities are also the communities with the greatest inability to overcome new challenges imposed by the pandemic.
2. Broadband connectivity is emerging as a major determinant of social, educational, economic, and health related outcomes among Baltimore City residents. Increasingly elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education is being offered in online formats. Lack of affordable connectivity effectively precludes a students’ ability to participate in the educational process. The same is true for job applications which are primarily online. Lack of connectivity effectively inhibits residents from applying for most employment opportunities. The problem even manifests in the healthcare sector, where initially because of the pandemic, all in-person care was temporarily halted and moved to virtual formats. Here again, we learned that those communities least likely to have affordable or reliable broadband connectivity options were also the communities most likely to suffer from other forms of economic and social inequities and injustices. These individuals and communities are also those at highest risk of being in poor health and at greatest risk for being unable to connect with health providers, thus further exacerbating health outcomes. Given this “gatekeeping” function that broadband connectivity is playing, it may well be prudent to consider broadband connectivity not only as a new social determinant of health, but also the first superdeterminant of health. This is because it is via broadband

connections that residents increasingly connect to all other facets of life. This is not true for any other social determinant of health.

3. Workforce training or upskilling as it is sometimes referred to, remains a huge need among many residents of Baltimore City. However, as the country continues to struggle with the broader impacts of the ongoing pandemic, the reality exists that many who complete traditional workforce readiness and job training programs, may still be unable to find actual employment. At the same time, the city, and our nation are grappling with a dearth of needed employees in the technology services sector. These are emerging as the jobs of the future and usually pay higher than expected wages for those who get the jobs. There exists an opportunity to reimagine job training programs to include programs that provide participants with the skills needed for these emerging digital and technological employment opportunities. Many of the skills needed to fill these jobs do not require college diplomas. Rather shorter term (3-6 month) specialized training is often all that is needed. For example, Google is now offering online training programs for \$50 per month. They offer 6-month program certifications and then guarantee those who complete the training, employment opportunities that generally start at \$80,000. No college degree needed. There are tremendous opportunities for partnering with schools and organizations like Google to provide 21st century skill training to residents of Baltimore city so that they can effectively compete for these high-quality jobs of today and tomorrow.
4. Affordable and safe housing remains a significant challenge for many residents of Baltimore city. Current solutions, while helpful, are simply not enough to meet the current need. In addition, given the expiring moratoriums on foreclosures and evictions, these problems are likely to get far worse in the foreseeable future. At the same time, however, as a consequence of both the pandemic and the technological transformation of the US, many brick-and-mortar stores, malls, and office complexes have closed. While in the past, these represents significant revenue and tax generators for cities, many of these spaces are now becoming crime hot spots, depressing local neighborhood home values, and driving up costs for a variety of city services needed to keep the buildings and spaces secure. Given this confluence of crises, there may be an opportunity to reimagine these abandoned homes, malls and office complexes as affordable housing, educational and supportive housing centers for those in need.

Summary of subcommittee activities for 2021 include:

HHS: Collaboration with Baltimore City Health Department and Office of Minority Health, participating on activities related to Charmcare.org, LHIC, COVID disparities work in the community, convened multiple community conversations related to COVID 19 pandemic.

Housing: Comprehensive review of housing policies and practices that can contribute to improved health, identified strategies and resources that impact poor housing on health, recognized the connections between poor housing. Building connections with health and housing leaders across Baltimore City.

Social Justice: Working with community organizations (BUILD and TAT) to assist returning citizens with leadership and workforce development skills, liaison with Baltimore City Police Department, civic engagement campaign-voter registration, working with the Sandtown Winchester Harlem Park Master Plan Collective and the Housing and Community Development, and community discussion groups and community surveys.

Education: Initiated work on a comprehensive review to understand the impact of violence in schools in Baltimore, attended workshop in Baltimore City on the Kirwan report to understand how the subcommittee could align activities with report recommendations, and convened community conversation on challenges and opportunities with virtual education during the pandemic.

Workforce Development and Jobs: Collaboration with Minister Conference of Baltimore and Vicinity-Coalition (group of 125 churches), workforce development training in partnership with Verizon, Comcast, Baltimore City, Tech training program, gaming, and machine summer camp for youths.

The report that follows provides a detailed description of the activities for each of the SDoH Taskforce of Baltimore City subcommittees.

*Dr. Yolanda Ogbolu and Dr. Chris Gibbons
Chair and Co-Chair, Social Determinants of Health Taskforce*

Annual Report Social Determinants of Health Taskforce of Baltimore City

Legislative History

On May 15, 2018, Governor Larry Hogan signed into law, Senate Bill 444 *The Taskforce on the Social Determinants of Health in Baltimore City* (SDoH-TF). The SDoH-TF was quickly convened thereafter, with an advisory board appointed by both Senator Shirley Nathan-Pulliam and the University of Maryland, Baltimore President, Jay Perman, MD. The bill “establishes the Taskforce on Social Determinants of Health in Baltimore City and an associated advisory board. The University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus provides staff support for the Taskforce. By December each year, the Taskforce must submit a report to the Governor and the General Assembly. The bill takes effect July 1, 2018, and terminates June 30, 2025” (cited: p. 1, 2017 SB 444 Fiscal Policy Note).

Taskforce Goals and Responsibilities

The Taskforce is charged with identifying and analyzing the cyclical, multi-generational negative social factors, which create hardship for residents of Baltimore City, and to design and implement solutions to improve the environment in which Baltimore City residents live, work, play, and worship. The Advisory Board of the Taskforce must appoint members of the Taskforce, manage Taskforce activities, and adopt bylaws or rules to govern the Taskforce operations. The Advisory Board is required to consult with the Office of Minority Health and Disparities and to appoint chairs and co-chairs of the five SDoH-TF specific subcommittees. The Taskforce may apply for grants from public and private entities to carry out its duties (cited: p. 2, SB 444 Fiscal Policy). Note: SDoH-TF subcommittees are tasked with developing recommendations and collaborating with community organizations on projects to address specific social determinants of health (SDH).

The SDoH-TF focus areas includes, but are not limited to:

1. **Education:** Focused on the lack of adequate schools, educational materials, opportunities, and low graduation rates across Baltimore City.
2. **Housing:** Focused on areas where urban blight, neglect, abandoned housing, poor street lighting, and broken pavement are contributing to unacceptable housing conditions for city residents.
3. **Workforce Development and Jobs:** Focused on the lack of economic opportunities (sustainable employment/chronic unemployment, underemployment/training opportunities/need for more training programs to spur opportunities) for residents living in the low-income neighborhoods of Baltimore City.
4. **Health and Human Services:** Focused on addressing the high rates of communicable and chronic diseases, including Hepatitis C, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, stroke, as well as mental health, suicide, high infant mortality, low birth rates, poor and inadequate nutrition, excess morbidity, high rates of alcoholism, as well as opioid and other substance use.

5. **Social Justice/Civil Unrest - Changed to Social Justice:** Focused on reducing neighborhood crime, homicides, rape, robbery, domestic violence, gang activity, and inappropriate police activity.

Summary of 2021 Taskforce Five Subcommittee Activities

Health and Human Services Subcommittee Activities 2021

The overarching goal of the Health and Human Services (HHS) subcommittee is to reduce social determinants of health that adversely affect the citizens of Baltimore City. The HHS subcommittee works to raise awareness and expand the capacity of health and human service resources in economically distressed communities in Baltimore City where citizens experience health disparities.

Community Activities and Presentations

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the HHS subcommittee transitioned from face-to-face monthly meetings to virtual meetings, met virtually with community leaders, and shared strategies and information related to resources that addressed community needs.

To address some issues e.g., vaccination hesitancy, transportation to and from vaccine sites, and registration assistance for Baltimore City residents, the HHS subcommittee organized and hosted a webinar titled, **Kitchen Table Talk: Community COVID-19 Vaccine Conversation**. The webinar hosted 63 participants. The video has since been uploaded to YouTube and the SDoH-TF webpage. To ensure vaccine access for Baltimore City residents with disabilities and or lack of transportation, the HHS subcommittee collaborated with Mrs. Sharonda Huffman, Accessibility & Compliance Coordinator, City of Baltimore Office of Equity & Civil Rights - Disabilities Section, Sheryl Grossman Accessible Vaccine Response Advocate, Image Maryland -Center for Independent Living, and leaders in the VALUE (Vaccine Acceptance Lives in Unity Education and Engagement) Initiative. The VALUE Initiative included individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, older citizens, young men, Hispanic/Latinx population, and pregnant and lactating women. Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) created an Ambassador program. The Ambassadors work increased COVID-19 literacy, trust, and unity. The HHS subcommittee and Taskforce increased community awareness of COVID-19, as well as shared knowledge via lay publications and speaking engagements.

An abbreviated list of publications and speaking engagements...

- Dr. Watties-Daniels posted health and wellness issues topics in the Grace and Glory magazine.
- Dr. Belcher authored an article in the Afro, COVID-19: What We Must Do for Ourselves and What We Must Do for Others.
- Dr. Belcher gave nine presentations locally to over 900 attendees on topic including COVID-19 vaccine, addressing health disparities, improving mental health in the Black

community, and expanding diversity in the public health workforce through culturally responsive mentoring.

The Taskforce health and wellness initiatives expanded to also include Alzheimer's disease, breast cancer awareness, caregiver support, and home safety.

Taskforce members (Dr. Belcher, Dr. Watties-Daniels, and Dr. Ogbolu) initiated and continue to participate in the re-established Baltimore City Local Health Improvement Coalition (LHIC). The LHIC fosters shared leadership with the community to identify and address the most pressing health concerns for Baltimore City. Dr. Kendra McDow, Baltimore City Chief Medical Officer, and Ms. Elise Bowman, Project Director of the Accountable Health Communities for the Baltimore City Health Department are leading this effort. The LHIC's activities will include a community health needs assessment, community health resources inventory, and the development of a steering committee. A mandatory focus will be comprehensive care of individuals with diabetes. The community also identified the social determinants of health as a priority concern to address.

HHS Subcommittee - Policy Recommendations 2021

The HHS subcommittee reviewed the County Health rankings for Baltimore City and believe the following policy recommendations could support the health and well-being of Baltimore City's citizens.

- Support Medicare for all expansion and limit opt out capacity that excludes high quality Medicare options for Baltimore residents with chronic disease who live in marginalized communities and are heavily impacted by health disparities
- Increase minimum wage in Baltimore City to \$15/hr. in 2022
 - With an increase to \$17/hour by 2025
- Expand support for nursing education and wellbeing of the nursing workforce
- Expand health clinics in schools
 - Address mental health and teen pregnancy
 - Expand the number of school nurses
 - Consider community health worker models in public schools
- Develop and Implement Crisis Response Teams
 - Crisis Response Team needed to prevent unnecessary violence and loss of life among people in mental health crisis and expand co-responder models. Co-responders are Community Response Teams (CRTs), where the mental health professionals accompany police officers when they respond to calls from families who report mental health crises with their loved ones.
- Expand quality of mental health care services in housing shelters and provide the necessary resources and funding for organizations to provide adequate mental health services with accountability and auditing. Enhance capacity while avoiding closures of existing facilities.

HHS Subcommittee 2022 Goals

1. Raise awareness of the availability of health and human service resources for economically distressed communities in Baltimore City.

2. Partner with representatives of academic institutions and organizations such as faith-based, medical, and community-based to disseminate information on resources to be shared with communities in need and in turn ameliorate adverse social determinants of health.
3. Convene regular discussions among HHS subcommittee members and community leaders to identify unmet needs for resources to address the social determinants of health in Baltimore City.

Housing Subcommittee Activities 2021

The Housing subcommittee continues to explore the landscape of healthy housing and health indicators sensitive to the indoor/ housing environment. During the past year, there was change in leadership of the subcommittee, Nicole Earle and Dr. Marik Moen were selected as chair and co-chair of the SDoH-TF. The Housing subcommittee also welcomed three new members and Claudia Randall, Executive of Community Development.

The Housing subcommittee continues to focus on 1) expanding its membership and 2) engaging with key leaders in addressing homelessness, housing, and healthy housing in the Baltimore area. Thus, the Housing subcommittee met with:

- Green and Healthy Homes Initiative, Ruth Ann Norton, CEO
- Healthcare for the Homeless, Joanna Diamond, Director of Public Policy
- Commissioner of Housing for Baltimore City – Alice Kennedy
- Director of Baltimore Field Office of HUD, Carol Payne
- Mayor’s Office of Homeless Services, Director Irene Augustin, Deputy Dr. Bill Wells
- The subcommittee met with Fulton Bank, a sponsor of CDN week – and Emerging Opportunities in Health and Housing
- Mark Luckner, Executive Director of Maryland Community Health Resources Commission.

In 2022, the Housing subcommittee will meet with Kaiser Permanente, Life Bridge Health, and University of Maryland Medical Center.

Housing Subcommittee Policy Recommendations 2021

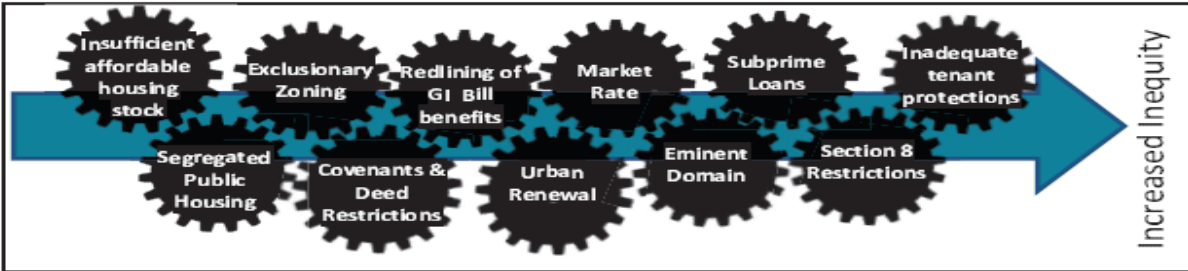
Based on the comprehensive report and COVID-19 related challenges, the Housing subcommittee offers the following policy recommendations.

- **Assisting low-income individuals to secure housing**
 - With over 4,000 homeless and a large returning citizen population, develop a streamlined process and expanded funding to cover application fees for individuals experiencing poverty or homelessness to access to vital records such as a birth certificate, an ID in a timely manner to allow easier access to housing and other resources--
 - Create a returning citizens program with particular focus on connection to housing and healthcare services especially for aging returning citizens, who are likely to have comorbidities including Hepatitis C which can lead to liver cancer.

Improve connections between housing program data and health data

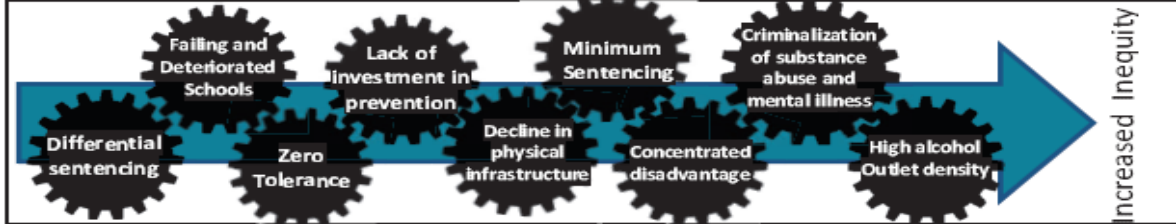
- Create of a central repository in the State for all Federal, State and City funded health programs. Develop a state-wide database, with a shared set of targets for each SDoH factor and standardize key performance indicators for each publicly funded Health agency and provider and begin the regular and consistent collection and aggregation of health data.
 - Create an evaluation protocol for health indicators to implement as part of Housing and Health projects and programs funded by Federal, State and City dollars.
 - Publicly funded projects and applications for public housing funds should include health metrics/indicators and addressing health outcomes should be prioritized
- **Increase funding for affordable housing by 10%**
 - Secure American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and other public and private funds and partnerships to significantly expand funding for quality, affordable housing
 - Increase funding and resources for permanent supportive housing to support vulnerable individuals to remain housed
- **Implement whole neighborhood, whole house, whole individual healthy housing/environment initiatives**
 - Increase tree coverage in communities with high asthma by five percent per year
 - Create a fund for a pilot program in Baltimore in two to five zip codes with the worst health disparities and where there is a strong non-profit presence to carry out a whole house renovation program to address top health disparities such as asthma and falls, i.e., patterned after the Healthy Rowhouse project in Philadelphia.
 - Increase HUBS funding. Create a fund for low-income Baltimore homeowners for home repairs inclusive of energy efficiency and lead reduction building on evidence of programs in Philadelphia. The Restore, Repair, and Renew is an initiative of the City of Philadelphia and Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority to help Philadelphia homeowners access low-interest home equity loans to invest in their properties. Lenders participating in the program are offering a 10-year fixed-rate 3% interest home equity term loan ranging from \$2,500 to \$24,999 (inclusive of 10% contingency) to eligible homeowners with a household income of 120% of area median or less. Loans can fund a range of home repairs that focus on health, safety, weatherization, accessibility and modernizing outdated features. The goal of the program is to help Philadelphians improve their homes and strengthen their communities
 - Create a taskforce to review unhealthy, unfair, harmful housing, and zoning laws in the state

Sample Policies, Laws, Practices, and Procedures that Produce Inequity (What & How)



Key sectors (Who): Banking/Finance, Business/Industry, Economic Development, Housing, Land Use & Management

Sample Policies, Laws, Practices and Procedures that Produce Inequity (What & How)



Key sectors (Who): Banking/Finance, Business/Industry, Economic Development, Education, Housing, Human/Social Services, Justice, Land Use & Management, Public Health, Workforce Development

Source: Countering the Production of Inequities: A Framework to Achieve Equitable Culture of Health, The Prevention Institute (2016).

Housing Committee 2022 Goals

- Advocate for better data collection needed to understand the associations between poor housing and health. Collaborate with partners to improve measures and tracking of health data in housing projects.
- Create strong cross-sector partnership supported by anchor institutions (esp. healthcare) and foundations to secure innovative investments at intersection of health and housing. We seek to work with a network of partners, adding our voices and insights to advocacy, projects, policies, or legislation that increases quality, affordable housing, expands resources for restoring/rehabbing housing, and augments overall funding to prioritize healthy housing.
 - Continue to convene meeting with Green and Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI), Ruth Ann Norton and Claudia Randall from the Community Development Network
 - Invite HUD Director, Carol Payne to meet with subcommittee
 - Engage with healthcare partners, Kaiser, LifeBridge, Medstar, UMMC, Greater Baltimore Regional Integrated Crisis Services (GBRICS) to learn more about SDOH housing initiatives and to seek opportunities for collaboration
 - Outreach to area foundations/philanthropic leaders around SDOH and housing and advocacy
 - Identify key points/opportunities for advocacy for us to synergize our communication and strategies with philanthropy and healthcare leaders
 - Enhance interaction with our lead Senator and Delegate and the Baltimore Delegation related to housing
- Catalogue innovative SDOH programs around the country that are addressing housing challenges to find lessons that can be replicated in Maryland.

Education Subcommittee Activities 2021

The goals of the Education subcommittee are to address the inadequacies in schools and educational materials, as well as the impact of violence and mental health on the ability of children to learn. In 2021, the Education subcommittee focused on the effect online learning had on children and their families in the Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) system. The digital divide was the most prevalent topic in 2020 and viewed (rightfully so) as the cause of inequality in BCPS. However, the Education subcommittee learned that in addition to the digital divide, children struggled learning online, especially children in Baltimore City's low-income communities.

To address the impact of online learning, the Education subcommittee hosted a public meeting. This public meeting was designed to examine what worked, did not work, and what could have been done better with regards to online learning. The public meeting titled *Community Conversation on the Challenges of Online Education* held on June 3, 2021, via Zoom was well attended. The panelists (Dennis Scott, Dr. Marc Gomes, Ms. Denise Reid, and Dr. Arthur Hill) discussed the challenges associated with online education. The Education subcommittee gained much insight from parents, a principal, and community leaders.

The Education subcommittee continues to focus on understanding and seeking opportunities to support the challenges of learning in marginalized populations; specifically, since researchers declared that when schools return to in-class format, students in the most vulnerable populations i.e., homeless, deep poverty, and disabled will most likely be forced to play catch-up.

Education Subcommittee Policy Recommendations 2021

A. Address the digital divide to improve education for Baltimore City's children

- a. Ensure that every household in Baltimore City has the cable and fibers necessary for internet service.
- b. Enhance policies and funding that ensures all 84,000 students in Baltimore City have a functioning computer and internet service, which are essential to avoiding intergenerational gaps in knowledge.
- c. Identify and fund opportunities to establish free Wi-Fi hotspots on rooftops of stakeholder organizations in Baltimore City.

B. Promote and expand mental health initiatives within the K-12 school system

- a. Provide mental health services to assist children to deal with the traumatic experiences associated with COVID-19, adverse childhood experiences, and exposure to violence and violent behaviors in the community. Key issues to be addressed include social isolation (disconnections from schoolmates, friends and family supports) and accumulated deaths and loss of friends and family members due to violence and COVID-19.

C. Support the development of community educational centers for multi-generational learning that are well equipped to educate leaders of the 21st Century

- a. The Education subcommittee recommends a pilot program in which Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) supports the development of and/or approve alternative measures of achievement as well as waiving existing laws and regulations that currently hinder the process.
- b. State policies should be developed that encourage and facilitate the sharing of schools and other facilities for virtual/in-person education centers for multi-generational learning and other community building activities.
- c. State policies should also support the planning and design, and construction or modifying buildings for the ongoing shared public use of public-school facilities and other government entities for virtual/in-person educational activities.

Education Subcommittee 2022 Goals

1. **Promote and expand mental health initiatives within the K-12 school system:**
Provide mental health services to assist children to deal with the traumatic experiences associated with COVID-19, adverse childhood experiences, and exposure to violence and violent behaviors in the community. Key issues to be addressed include social isolation (disconnections from schoolmates, friends and family supports) and accumulated deaths and loss of friends and family members due to violence and COVID-19.
2. **Promote trauma informed instruction and professional development initiatives** for educators and student: Promote and expand restorative justice practices and pedagogical approaches for educators and leaders within the K-12 school system.
3. **Collaborate with local partners to address the digital divide to improve education for Baltimore City’s children**
 - d. Ensure that every household in Baltimore City has the cable and fibers necessary for internet service.
 - e. Enhance policies and funding that ensures all 84,000 students in Baltimore City have a functioning computer and internet service, which are essential to avoiding intergenerational gaps in knowledge.
 - f. Identify and fund opportunities to establish free Wi-Fi hotspots on rooftops of stakeholder organizations in Baltimore City.

Social Justice Subcommittee Activities 2021

The goal of the Social Justice subcommittee is to lessen the impact of crime and violence, reduce the rate of recidivism in West Baltimore City (zip code 21217), and better understand the dynamics around conflict resulting in violence. In 2021, the Social Justice subcommittee worked on recidivism, joblessness, and neighborhood welfare.

The Social Justice subcommittee’s advanced relationship with Turn Around Tuesday (TAT) - a jobs’ movement that focuses on reducing crime and violence by providing those with criminal backgrounds an opportunity to obtain livable wage employment – helped many returning to

society. Since 2015, the number of livable wage jobs provided was 1,053. TAT's model to improve job retention includes following participants for two years.

The Social Justice subcommittee participates in various recruitment campaigns (e.g., virtual, and otherwise) to help spread the word about TAT. For example, during COVID-19, TAT transitioned to virtual mode. Thus, remaining virtually operational allowed TAT to provide financial assistance to participants (i.e., rent and utilities) and distribute food via door delivery.

The Social Justice subcommittee recognized collaboration could have a more significant impact in Baltimore City communities. Thus, the Social Justice subcommittee joined forces with the Sandtown Winchester Harlem Park Master Plan Steering Committee ("the Steering Committee") to develop a community-led Master Plan. The Sandtown Winchester Harlem Park Master Plan Collective (SWHPMC) was formed and is comprised of residents, community members, leaders, and organizers in the Sandtown Winchester and Harlem Park neighborhoods working together to guide a comprehensive master plan initiative for the long-term betterment of Baltimore City communities. The community engagement commenced in April 2021 with its first meeting on Monday, April 12, 2021, that welcomed 96 participants, received a community catalyst grant, and secured a fiscal sponsor. (The Website www.swhpmasterplan.com).

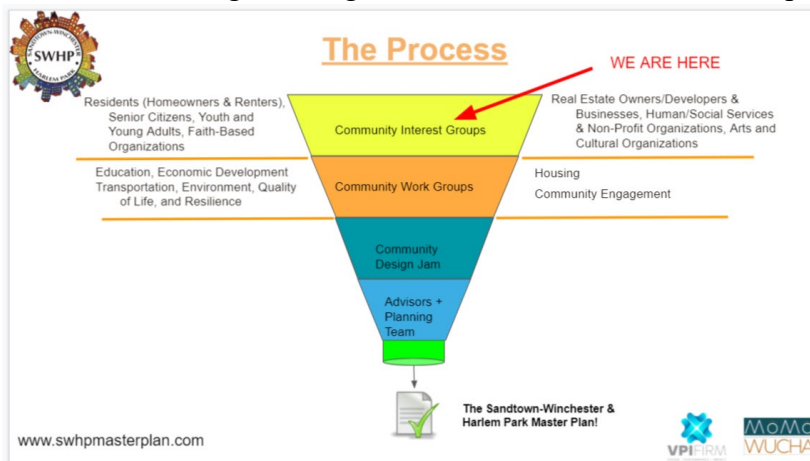
This community-led process could not be successful without participation from organizations, such as the Social Justice subcommittee, Steering Committee Members – Community Members, No Boundaries Coalition, Clergy United for the Transformation of Sandtown (CUTS), Catholic Charities, Community Law Center, Baltimore City and more. The SWHPMC implemented an advisory board of professionals, subject matter experts, and consultant firm -VPI. Under the guidance of the SWHPMPC, the VPI consultant performed the necessary community visioning and engagement, conducted research, and provided due diligence to complete a draft of the plan for review. Additionally, the consultant advised the community of the review and approval process by the Planning Commission.

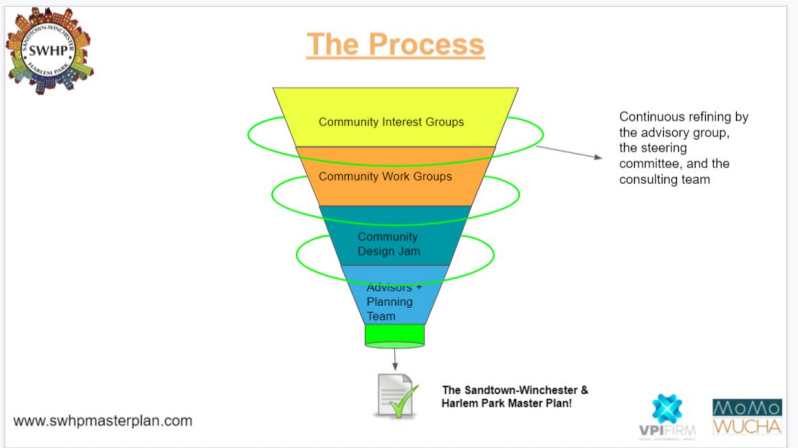
The Social Justice subcommittee met regularly with the neighborhood Steering Committee to organize and strategize the master plan process, as well as discussed project goals, met with the VPI consultant, and planned and coordinated biweekly community-led listening sessions. The first four sessions were virtual. The last two sessions were in-person. Each in-person community meeting was held in the respective subdivision/community and led by a facilitator chosen by VPI (consultant). During the meetings, the residents were divided into community work groups or breakout groups to promote inclusivity. Community Work Groups were tasked with identifying barriers and challenges within the community and developing ideas and strategies to circumvent those barriers and challenges. In subsequent meetings, groups were asked to refine their ideas into categories.

To ensure the highest quality planning process with (and for) the residents of Sandtown Winchester and Harlem Park, the following guiding principles, as well as integrity and commitment were established for all committee's members.

1. Promote the best interest of community partners in the Sandtown Winchester and Harlem Park neighborhoods and residents through the Master Planning process.
2. Operate from a place of goodwill and mutual best intentions.
3. Display a willingness to compromise on solutions not entirely aligned with your own and bring an open mind to potentially innovative ideas.
4. Members should be receptive and cooperative to training and coaching endeavors.
5. Create a safe space that welcomes diverse perspectives and brings voice and thoughts to the table, even if they are different.
6. Encourage all members to remain consistent in attendance, punctuality, and engagement for regular Steering Committee meetings and activities.
7. Share neighborhood information with the Steering Committee like events, proposed development plans, community projects, etc., that may affect the overall Master Plan.
8. Treat sensitive details of the Master Plan as confidential until it is released to the public.
9. Continue to advocate for change, equity, and sustainable resources for the Sandtown Winchester and Harlem Park communities throughout the Master Planning process and after that.

The Social Justice subcommittee and the SWHPMPC created a unified and more robust catalyst for community change. While their work is ongoing, both solution-oriented groups (Social Justice subcommittee and SWHPMPC) seek a change that encourages the Sandtown Winchester/Harlem Park residents to rise from the silo mentality that inhibits substantial modifications in their communities. Likewise, restore the brilliant history of these neighborhoods from the negative images overshadowed by events in recent years. Thus, to help these neighborhoods emerge from this inferior state and conditions, the Social Justice subcommittee and SWHPMPC as part of the ongoing process will continue to 1) help members transform their current weaknesses and threats into opportunities and strengths; and 2) help residents in communities overwhelmed with the abundance of vacant land and houses to envision and develop a sustainable future for the neighborhoods. Equally important is helping these communities become apparent, important, and prominent. It is time to recognize these neighborhoods in a different light and make it apparent that all citizens deserve a fundamental quality of life that will heal, motivate, and encourage. Thankfully, the community catalyst grant can begin to spark the changes that will improve the quality of life for residents by identifying needs and defining a strategic and action-oriented vision and plan.





The Master Plan is expected to be completed by 2022 at which time the Social Justice subcommittee and SWHPMPC will formally present the Master Plan to Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development. The collective was granted an extension on the completion of the project -new fiscal sponsor.

Social Justice Subcommittee Policy Recommendation 2021

The Social Justice subcommittee recommends that voter registration be automatic for residents receiving Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) and Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) benefits. According to data from the Stanford Social Innovation Review (2020), voter turnout rate among those earning more than \$100,000 to \$150,00 per year remains higher than those earning less than \$20,000. In an effort to empower communities of color in critical civic engagement, the Social Justice subcommittee recommends citizens who inherently depend on taxpayer/ state / federal funding support, be automatically registered to vote.

Social Justice Subcommittee 2022 Goals

The Social Justice subcommittee’s work in the community and the collaboration with various community organizations are ongoing. Some goals for 2021 could not be operational due to COVID-19 and social distancing restrictions; therefore, the list includes those deferred goals.

- Continue building a working relationship with TAT, Safe Streets, No Shoot Zone, and CeaseFire in a collaborative and strategic effort to reduce crime in Sandtown and Harlem Park.
- Continue disseminating information from community organizations in West Baltimore City to the Baltimore City Police Department (BCPD). Information such as discouraging locking up or relocking up those who lack conflict resolution skills around minor offenses and encouraging positive relationship building with BCPD.
- Continue collaborating with the Western District police chaplains to discuss ways to engage residents in a positive manner with the BCPD.
- Invite Safe Streets, CeaseFire, and No Shoot Zone to speak at a future SDHTF’s general meeting forum and complete a safety survey.
- Continue to collaborate with community organizations such as, BUILD, TAT, HPW, and

Step Forward to increase voter turnout in Harlem Park's Neighborhood. The goal is to increase voter turnout in one neighborhood by 50% over seven years. Despite COVID-19, these groups continued to educate residents about the positive impact voting has on the community and the negative consequences that can result from non-participation in the voting process.

- Continue to engage and support Step Forward, a program designed to support individuals struggling with substance use disorder in community outreach activities as part of their holistic treatment plan.
- Collaborate to develop a community led Master Plan to present to the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) in anticipation of adoption of the plan by DHCD to facilitate largescale community revitalization and redevelopment of the Sandtown-Winchester Harlem Park communities.

Workforce Development & Jobs Subcommittee Activities 2021

The goals of the Workforce and Economic Development subcommittee are to address unsustainable employment, chronic unemployment, and underemployment; job training; and employment for returning residents and other vulnerable populations.

In 2020, the Workforce and Economic Development subcommittee continued its work with the Ministers' Conference Empowerment Center CDC (MCEC), a community development nonprofit founded by the Ministers' Conference of Baltimore and Vicinity (MCBV). While 2020 was challenging to navigate due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 was more promising and productive. The committee's progress built on earlier work that supported the placement of technology hubs ("tech hub centers") in churches to train youth and young adults. The tech hub centers' placement in economic development hubs in trusted institutions such as churches and community centers enhanced the ability to sustain the committee's work despite COVID-related challenges. The centers' pivoted from their traditional roles to meet the overwhelming needs of the community during the pandemic. They also continued to facilitate services to some of Baltimore City's most vulnerable children, youth, and their families.

The subcommittee continued to engage with churches and community centers that housed the workforce tech hub centers, particularly as they worked tirelessly to meet the ever-emerging needs of the community during the pandemic. Activities included services such as supplying emergency food and assisting with the burials of family members and sometimes entire families who expired due to COVID-19. Due to location, some churches and centers served in-person young people, particularly with disabilities, in the tech hub centers. Other sites offered virtual computer coding instruction when the centers closed due to COVID-19 restrictions. The lack of access to computers and the internet interfered with the virtual coding training. However, the shift to virtual tech hubs allowed leaders to connect with participants and their families. With external funding provided, various tech hubs were able to implement COVID-19 safety measures

such as purchasing plexiglass dividers, large amounts of disinfectant, and personal protective equipment (PPE) for both the participants and staff. Doing so, enabled the tech hubs to assist Baltimore City's most vulnerable population face to face, specifically youth with special educational needs. The tech hub served as a critical service by providing children with disabilities a classroom environment. The safety measures allowed small groups of special needs youth and their instructors to operate in the tech hub centers. This collaboration for special needs youth leveraged after-school programs that were in place before the pandemic.

Additionally, summer camps were provided at tech hubs. This resulted in tech hubs expanding their space. The collaboration and pivot from regular programming to helping the communities survive the pandemic played a critical role in preserving the mental health and stability of the communities. For example, for many Baltimore City residents to participate in virtual education, they had to travel to locate and tap into wi-fi hotspots outside malls, stores, and or libraries. Community members, as a result, were permitted to utilize the services at tech hubs opened for in-person, to complete their school studies. While the workforce tech hubs were not intended to accommodate this type of programming, the latitude given to community members have solidified the rationale for placing tech hubs in the communities and in trusted institutions. Furthermore, the programs have created robust connections with community residents. The trusting relationships built in the workforce tech hub centers resulted in additional people being vaccinated. The individuals vaccinated resided in some of the most non-trusting communities of color and vulnerable populations. These relationships supported community capacity to build a healthier city by offering vaccines.

The COVID-19 pandemic showed that healthcare is a major impeding factor for the workforce and economic development. As demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic, the historical mistrust of medical treatment for comorbidities inundates communities of color and vulnerable populations undergird this impediment. Baltimore City communities are a primary source of essential workers and workforce development training. The Baltimore City residents make up a significant portion of the necessary labor workforce for industry, particularly commerce and manufacturing, and they were all a critical driving force during the pandemic. Unfortunately, these individuals experienced significant trauma regarding the medical community's historical treatment, such as the Tuskegee Syphilis Study and the alike. Exposure to medical care-related trauma is connected to the reluctance of this population to take the vaccine and, in some cases, to acknowledge the existence of or receive the treatment for COVID-19. This exposure to trauma is significant because it has negative consequences for people returning to work and building a healthy workforce. Providing evidence-based, trauma-informed cultural competency and implicit bias training to address the current historical comorbidities is urgently needed to break vaccination barriers for marginalized groups with the highest infection and death rates of COVID-19. Expanding Medicaid programs to include workforce development programs is also an essential strategy to strengthen the current and future workforce and enable a healthier potential employment pool. Further, workforce development training programs and healthcare services should be co-located in the community. Neighboring the workforce development programs and healthcare services in the communities would remove barriers such as transportation, missed appointments, and or lack (of) for workers and their families. In addition, the location of these programs in churches, other houses of faith, and community centers, similar

to the MCEC Tech Centers, will enable better access to resources needed by the workforce program participants.

In collaboration with MCEC, the subcommittee has continued to meet with potential partners. MCEC has formed a community partnership with the Port of Baltimore, which is a critical part of Baltimore City's economy. For example, cargo and cruise activity at the public and private marine terminals of Port of Baltimore generated 37,297 direct, induced, and indirect jobs. As a result of the Port's growth and extended use, it needs more job-ready Baltimore residents. Therefore, the Port and MCEC are working together to create the Cradle to Career Pipeline. This pipeline program that will start acclimating children as early as kindergarten to maritime and transportation careers. The program will continue through 12th grade and include adult learning and job placement and career advancement at the Port and other businesses needing well-trained maritime and transportation employees. MCEC is currently working with the Park Heights, Penn North, Southwest & Franklin Square, and Cherry Hill communities, and the Port of Baltimore to implement this pipeline for the maritime and transportation careers.

In summary, the Workforce and Economic Development subcommittee's goal was to support MCEC, to fully implement the churches' programs, and to open additional centers in Baltimore City. However, COVID-19 delayed the entire implementation. Nevertheless, the lessons learned during the past year has alerted the Workforce and Economic Development subcommittee to additional special considerations for economic advancement, including the health of the participant, the need for a k-12th grade education, special needs children, adult learning, job placement, and career workforce development continuum strategy, such as the Cradle to Career Pipeline. Despite the delayed implementation, the Workforce and Economic Development subcommittee, via its work with MCEC, has continued to expand the tech hub centers and bring additional partners to the table to advance the initiative further. To that end, the Workforce and Economic Development subcommittee will continue to collaborate with the SDoH-TF subcommittees, especially the HHS and Education subcommittees, to support the work of the overall Taskforce while focusing more on the health needs of the tech hub center participants realized during the pandemic. The Workforce and Economic Development subcommittee is also looking forward to advancing the Cradle to Career Pipeline with the Port of Baltimore and the Park Heights, Penn North, Southwest & Franklin Square, and Cherry Hill communities.

Workforce and Economic Development Subcommittee Policy Recommendations 2021

- 1. Expand expungement policies to support persons with prior offenses to support their capacity to be re-integrated into the workforce.**
- 2. Returning citizens:** People returning to Baltimore City from prison need support with expungement of their criminal records, where appropriate. The Department of Justice (2019) recognizes that consequences of criminal records not only have a detrimental effect on individuals and family economic security, but it also creates a range of lifelong

obstacles (i.e., voting, civic participation, education, employment, professional licensing, housing, and receipt of public benefits that impedes re-entry into society).

3. **Review and revise policies related to penalties regarding one losing his or her driver's license for delinquency in child support.** Under Maryland law, child support arrearages automatically result in suspension of the debtor's driver's license, significantly hampering an individual's ability to have personal transportation that would allow one to secure and maintain income.
4. **Provide supportive services for those who are unemployed.** Work with local and state workforce development agencies in Baltimore City to add supportive services for the unemployed including, but not limited to services such as, health care, substance use disorder treatment, and housing. Addressing these issues could allow individuals to obtain and retain employment.
5. **Expand Medicaid.** Work with legislators to expand Medicaid to workforce program participants and their families until they obtain employment.
6. **Provide cultural competency and diversity and inclusion training for health systems.** Work with legislators to develop federal and state mandates for health systems and facilities that are receiving monies from the American Recovery Plan Act of 2021 to undergo cultural competency training to develop strategies to address the current historical co-morbidities that continue to inundate communities of color and vulnerable populations that impede them from working.

Workforce and Economic Development Subcommittee 2022 Goals

1. Continue to collaborate with existing workforce programs and the mayor's office to seek synergies in workforce development.
2. Continue to expand the workforce tech centers initiative, which works to develop technology careers for adolescents and young people ages 16 to 24, obtain a job in technology industry in collaboration with the Ministers Conference Empowerment Center CDC.
3. Continue to solicit and develop a repository of opportunities with companies and programs willing to employ returning citizens and other vulnerable populations in Baltimore City.
4. Examine the availability of resources of funding from private, non-profits, and public organizations for workforce development and develop a report.
5. Work with the health and housing subcommittee to look for opportunities to connect health and housing to employment and jobs.
6. Solicit more subcommittee members who are actively engaged in workforce development opportunities in Baltimore City to participate as volunteer members of the subcommittee.
7. Work with legislators to expand Medicaid to workforce program participants and their families until they obtain employment.
8. Work with legislators to develop a mandate for health systems and facilities that are receiving monies from the American Recovery Plan Act of 2021 to undergo cultural

competency training to develop strategies to address the current historical co-morbidities that continue to inundate communities of color and vulnerable populations.

TASKFORCE SUMMARY & LESSONS LEARNED 2021

In summary, the four (4) compelling lessons learned for many over the last year include the following:

- The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to shine a spotlight on well-known inequalities and opportunities for addressing social determinants of health in Baltimore City. Those communities and populations that have historically been most affected by social and economic inequalities are also the communities with the greatest inability to overcome new challenges imposed by the pandemic.
- Broadband connectivity is a major determinant of social, educational, economic and health related outcomes among Baltimore City residents. Increasingly elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education is being offered in online formats. Lack of affordable connectivity effectively precludes a students' ability to participate in the educational process. The same is true for job applications which are primarily online. Lack of connectivity effectively inhibits residents from applying for most employment opportunities. The problem even manifests in the healthcare sector, where initially because of the pandemic, all in person care was temporarily halted and moved to virtual formats. Here again, we learned that those communities least likely to have affordable or reliable broadband connectivity options were also the communities most likely to suffer from other forms of economic and social inequities and injustices. These individuals and communities are also those at highest risk of being in poor health and at greatest risk for being unable to connect with health providers, thus further exacerbating health outcomes. Given this "gatekeeping" function that broadband connectivity is playing, it may well be prudent to consider broadband connectivity not only as a new social determinant of health, but also the first superdeterminant of health. This is because it is via broadband connections that residents increasingly connect to all other facets of life. This is not true for any other social determinant of health.
- Workforce training or upskilling as it is sometimes referred to, remains a huge need among many residents of Baltimore City. However, as the country continues to struggle with the broader impacts of the ongoing pandemic, the reality exists that many who complete traditional workforce readiness and job training programs, may still be unable to find actual employment. At the same time, the city, and our nation are grappling with a dearth of needed employees in the technology services sector. These are emerging as the jobs of the future and usually pay higher than expected wages for those who get the jobs. There exists an opportunity to reimagine job training programs to include programs that provide participants with the skills needed for these emerging digital and technological employment opportunities. Many of the skills needed to fill these jobs do not require college diplomas. Rather shorter term (3-6 month) specialized training is often all that is needed. For example,

Google is now offering online training programs for \$50 per month. They offer 6-month program certifications and then guarantee those who complete the training, employment opportunities that generally start at \$80,000. No college degree needed. There are tremendous opportunities for partnering with schools and organizations like Google to provide 21st century skill training to residents of Baltimore city so that they can effectively compete for these high-quality jobs of today and tomorrow.

- Affordable and safe housing remains a significant challenge for many residents of Baltimore city. Current solutions, while helpful, are simply not enough to meet the current need. In addition, given the expiring moratoriums on foreclosures and evictions, these problems are likely to get far worse in the foreseeable future. At the same time, however, as a consequence of both the pandemic and the technological transformation of the US, many brick-and-mortar stores, malls, and office complexes have closed. While in the past, these represent significant revenue and tax generators for cities, many of these spaces are now becoming crime hot spots, depressing local neighborhood home values, and driving up costs for a variety of city services needed to keep the buildings and spaces secure. Given this confluence of crises, there may be an opportunity to reimagine these abandoned homes, malls and office complexes as affordable housing, educational and supportive housing centers for those in need

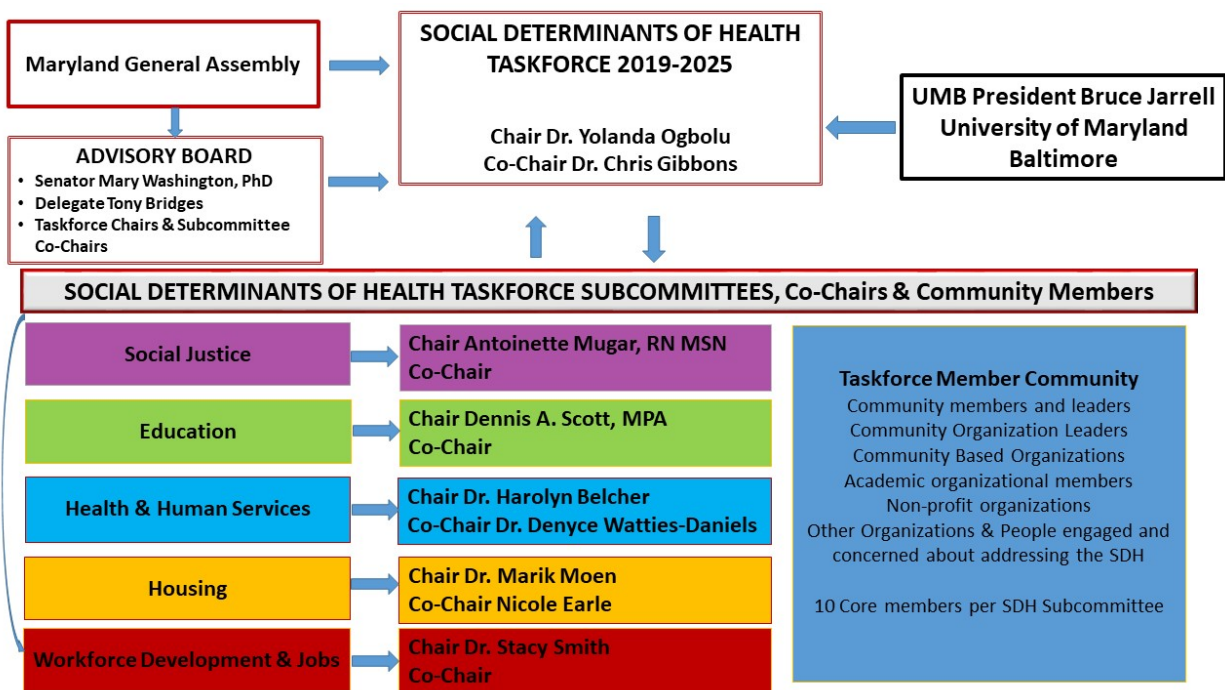
In 2021, significant changes to the Taskforce occurred. The Honorable Retired Senator Shirley Nathan-Pulliam no longer serves as the appointed member of the General Assembly. She continues to serve as a member and senior advisor to the Taskforce and its activities. The Taskforce welcomed Senator Dr. Mary Washington and Delegate Antonio “Tony” Bridges as the Taskforce’s appointed members of the General Assembly. Other transitions on the Taskforce included Dr. Annelle Primm (chair, Health and Human Services subcommittee) and Klaus Philipsen (chair, Housing subcommittee) stepping down from their leadership roles. Also, Charles Jackson stepped down as the co-chair of the Health and Human Service subcommittee. Each have agreed to continue to serve on their respective subcommittees. In 2021, new individuals have been appointed to the Taskforce i.e., Dr. Marik Moen and Nicole Earle were appointed as Co-Chairs of the Housing subcommittee, Dr. Harolyn Belcher appointed as chair of the Health and Human Services subcommittee, and Dr. Denyce Watties-Daniels appointed as co-chair of the Health and Human Services subcommittee.

REFERENCES

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: Taskforce Organizational Chart and Contact list



Taskforce Contacts

Taskforce

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Workforce Development and Jobs

Chair Dr. Stacy Smith
Co-Chair *vacant*

Smithbaltimore@gmail.com

APPENDIX II- Meeting Agendas

A. SDH Taskforce Leadership Meeting January 21, 2021

Meeting Agenda

- I. **Administrative**
 - a. Financial disclosures are due
 - b. SDH webpage updated
 - c. SDH Annual Report
 - d. Policy discussion
 - II. **Subcommittee reports-** Workforce Development; Education, Housing; Health; Social Justice
 - III. **Public meeting planning**
- Adjourned**

B. SDH Taskforce Leadership Meeting February 18, 2021

Meeting Agenda

- I. **Administrative**
 - a. Reminder: complete financial disclosures
 - b. Debriefing of meeting with UMB president, Dr. Bruce Jarrell
 - II. **Subcommittee reports-** Workforce Development; Education, Housing; Health; Social Justice
 - III. **Public meeting planning**
 - a. Discuss logistics of March 4th Table Talk
- Adjourned**


C. Public Meeting March 4, 2021









- I. Health and Human Services subcommittee (Drs. Belcher and Watties-Daniels) convened a public meeting via Zoom


THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH TASKFORCE FOR BALTIMORE CITY
PRESENTS

Kitchen Table Talk
**Community COVID-19 Vaccine
Conversation**

Thursday, March 4, 2021 | 6:00-7:30pm
Click here to register: [KITCHEN TABLE TALK](#)



Moderator		Panelists			
 DORICE WATTIES DANIELL DNP, RN SDH Co-Chair Health and Human Services Subcommittee and Event Coordinator From the Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health and Baltimore City Health Department	 DAMANI A. PIGOTT MD, PhD Assistant Professor, Center for Communications Programs and Director, Center for Health Equity Promotion and Research Johns Hopkins University	 HAROLD M. J. BELCHER MD, MSc SDH Co-Chair Health and Human Services Subcommittee and Event Coordinator Johns Hopkins University	 CARMEN LOPEZ-ARZU MD Professor and Director, Center for Health Equity Promotion and Research Johns Hopkins University		
Hosts		 YOLANDA OSOBOLU PhD, CEO/President, INAP, JAAH Taskforce Chair The National Black Leadership Initiative Institute, Johns Hopkins University	 CHRIS GIBBONS , MD, MPH Taskforce Co-Chair The Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health	 ROCIO WALTER SCOTT THMBA, BA Senior, Vice President, Health & Wellness The American Red Cross	 ALLYRIA C. MARAGH-BASS , PhD, MPH Assistant Professor, Department of Health, Behavior, and Society Johns Hopkins University

Sponsored By: 

D. SDH Taskforce Leadership Meeting March 25, 2021

Meeting Agenda

- I. **Administrative**
 - a. Financial disclosures, Kudos to former Senator Shirly Nathan-Pulliam
- II. **Subcommittee reports-** Workforce Development; Education, Housing; Health; Social Justice
- III. **Public meeting planning**
 - a. Education Table Talk

Adjourned

E. SDH Taskforce Leadership Meeting April 22, 2021

Meeting Agenda

- I. **Administrative**
 - a. Financial disclosures and ethics discussion,
 - b. Need additional leadership for committees and administrative support not available due to resignation of the administrative staff at UMB
- II. **Subcommittee reports-** Workforce Development; Education, Housing; Health; Social Justice
- III. **Public meeting planning**
 - a. Discuss logistics of Education Table Talk

Adjourned

F. SDH Taskforce Leadership Meeting May 20, 2021

Meeting Agenda

- I. **Administrative**
 - a. Discuss Education public meeting
- II. **Subcommittee reports-** Workforce Development; Education, Housing; Health; Social Justice
- III. **Public meeting planning-** Education Table Talk

Adjourned

G. Public Meeting June 3, 2021

Meeting Agenda

- II. **Subcommittee reports-** Workforce Development; Education, Housing; Health; Social Justice
 - III. **Public meeting planning**
- Adjourned**

K. SDH Leadership Meeting November 18, 2021

Meeting Agenda

- I. **Administrative-**
 - a. Review/discuss annual report (draft form)
 - II. **Subcommittee reports-** Workforce Development; Education, Housing; Health; Social Justice
 - III. **Public meeting planning**
- Adjourned**

APPENDIX III – Highlights

Presentations available on our website and YouTube, Website:
<https://www.umaryland.edu/sdh-taskforce/>