

Health Equity Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: April 7, 2026

Present

Commission Members: Ana Burke, Joanne Crawford, Mark Hughes, Zack Hughes, Monica Hutt, Kate Jerman, Justin Kenney, Sarah Launderville, Lauren Layman, Jeff Mbarushimana, Alex McCracken, Kirsten Murphy, Song Nguyen, Breanna Sheehan, Katie Stetler, Sandi Yandow

Others: Corali Cotrina, Heather Michaud, Jill Olson, Alison Segar

Agenda item	
Welcome and Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meeting began with round robin introductions, with those in attendance responding to the prompt, <i>“What am I going to do in mud season?”</i>
Rural Health Transformation Fund: Presentation from Jill Mazza Olson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jill Olson, Medicaid and Health Systems Director for the Agency of Human Services, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Rural Health Transformation Fund highlighting key program details, application parameters, initiative categories, initiative overview and ongoing stakeholder engagement. Discussion ensued regarding standing committees, the regional impact on where money can be spent, the definition of “rural” as it pertains to each project (planning projects, collaboration projects, training programs), measurements for success, or lack thereof, and a plan for ensuring the needs and voices of disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups, vulnerable populations and language access needs people are heard. Jill suggested that commission members review the year one project list to identify potential equity issues and submit questions, concerns and suggestions as to how those issues could be addressed. Jill also suggested that commission members begin looking at initiatives for year two.
Updates – Kate Jerman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reminder about the Vermont Changemakers Summit happening this Saturday, April 11, 2026. Kate announced the unification of the Office of Health Equity with the Vermont Department of Health’s Office of Health Equity Integration and commented on how this new union will strengthen and benefit the work being done by both groups. She said this news will be shared more broadly at VDH’s monthly staff meeting later this week. Short discussion regarding what impact this unification might have on current scope of responsibilities ensued.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new HEAC website on the VDH page is up and running. The new site provides easier access to HEAC agendas and meeting minutes and recordings. • A transition from HEAC partner accounts to an external SharePoint site is in the works. • Kate reminded HEAC members to complete the membership survey.
Public Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alison Segar commented on her lack of knowledge about the existence of the HEAC until just recently. She also proposed the addition of “refugees, im/migrants, asylees, people with language access needs” to the first paragraph of the main page of the HEAC website, noting the importance of naming the aforementioned group when thinking about health equity.
Review Minutes of March 10, 2026 Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of the Minutes was deferred. Mark will provide additional language to address the specific equity concerns raised by him at the March 10, 2026 meeting during the Rural Health Transformation Fund agenda item discussion. Sandi Yandow requested clarification in regard to next steps discussed at the March 10, 2026 meeting.
Other Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Vermont Chargers Power Soccer Club Memorial Cup takes place this Saturday, April 11, 2026 from 10-4 at the Patrick Gymnasium in Burlington.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year one project review. • Identify and analyze year one equity implications/mitigation strategy. • Identify aligned project opportunities for year two. • Sarah asked committee members with available time and expertise willing to participate in this work to reach out. • Kate offered support in finding a channel for members or constituencies who do not attend meetings to provide feedback • Coralie offered networking and outreach to people with language access needs, refugee, im/migrant and asylee communities to bridge the gap to obtain their input.
Adjourn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting adjourned at 1:59 p.m.