

Meeting Minutes #11 – Ohio The Health Collaborative Disaster Health Equity Task Force

Date: January 14, 2025

Time: 1:30 pm EST

Location: Zoom

Meeting Facilitators:

- Christina Alfaro
- Dee Grimm
- Nicole Volpenhein
- Jessica Skelton

Executive Summary:

- Dee Grimm led a review of the task force's three-year work on health equity and disaster issues for people with disabilities, identifying provider competency, communication barriers, and systemic bias as key focus areas.
- A deep dive into provider competency revealed challenges in training, organizational priorities, and systemic barriers, including lack of specific disability training and awareness of local disability demographics.
- Collaborative analysis using a "5 Whys" approach highlighted deeper issues such as funding challenges, lack of disability representation in decision-making roles, and the need for improved awareness of disability-related resources.

Meeting Notes:

Meeting Opening and Tool Introduction

- Nicole Volpenhein welcomed attendees and noted a last-minute change to a new Zoom account with additional features.
- Allysa Rapadas introduced a collaborative whiteboard tool for documenting the meeting and future planning:
 - Demonstrated how to navigate, zoom, and create sticky notes on the whiteboard.
 - Emphasized that the tool is for internal use only and will not be made public.
 - Encouraged participants to interact with the whiteboard, but also welcomed verbal comments and chat messages.
- Dee Grimm introduced herself as the meeting facilitator.

Review of Previous Work

- Dee Grimm provided a recap of the task force's work over the past three years:

- In 2024, surveys were conducted to gather both static and real-world information about health equity and disaster issues in communities.
- Surveys included both service recipients and providers.
- Static information from sources like census data and community health assessments was also analyzed.
- A root cause analysis was performed, resulting in a causal analysis highlight report.

Overview of Focus Areas

- Three main focus areas were identified from the previous work:
 - Provider competency: Concerns about community service providers' and first responders' ability to assist people with disabilities effectively.
 - Barriers to communication: Issues related to making communication more accessible for the disability community.
 - Systemic bias: Biases within agencies and organizations that create barriers to delivering inclusive and equitable services.

Deep Dive: Provider Competency Issues

Training Challenges

- Lack of consistent and specific training for providers on assisting people with disabilities:
 - Nicole Volpenhein noted the need to identify existing training for each domain of healthcare and first responders.
 - Participants highlighted that training is often too generic and not specific to managing different types of patients with disabilities.
 - There's a disconnect between providers claiming they've had training and service recipients reporting inadequate understanding of their needs.
- Insufficient knowledge about common disabilities in the region:
 - Lack of awareness about the specific disability demographics in the area served.
 - Need for more specific information about local disability populations to inform training and service provision.
- Unfamiliarity with specific resources:
 - Dee Grimm identified this as a key issue and led a "5 Whys" analysis to explore root causes.
 - Reasons discussed included low advertisement of resources, providers not being encouraged to seek training, and high staff turnover.

Organizational Priorities

- Organizations and individuals may not view disability training as important:
 - Infrequent disasters may lead to deprioritization of disability-specific training.
 - Dee Grimm noted the reactive nature of society, citing increased funding and attention after major events like 9/11.
 - Lack of awareness about the importance of disability competency in everyday situations and during emergencies.

- Perception that planning for "what-ifs" is expensive and unnecessary if disasters are infrequent.
- Lack of understanding about improved outcomes:
 - Jenny commented that organizations may not understand how improved competency leads to better health outcomes and improved population health.
- Absence of disability representation:
 - Deb pointed out that organizations may not have a disability team member, contributing to lack of awareness.

Systemic Barriers

- Funding challenges for disability-related training and initiatives:
 - A participant noted that political subdivisions are often unwilling to fund these types of interventions on a general basis.
- Lack of representation of people with disabilities in governance and decision-making roles:
 - Dee Grimm suggested this might lead to difficulties in getting federal involvement and support.
- Political factors affecting the implementation of disability initiatives:
 - Dee Grimm mentioned recent federal government actions limiting DEI initiatives as a potential concern.
- Dee Grimm noted that the "world is not disability ready," indicating systemic issues in accommodating people with disabilities.

Collaborative Whiteboard Activity

- Participants were encouraged to add sticky notes to the whiteboard identifying specific issues related to provider competency.
- Dee Grimm and Allysa Rapadas guided the process of grouping similar ideas and identifying themes:
 - Training issues were a prominent theme, including lack of consistency and specificity.
 - Awareness of local disability demographics emerged as another key issue.
 - Patient-provider relationship challenges were discussed, including time constraints and potential biases.
- A "5 Whys" analysis was demonstrated:
 - The initial problem identified was "unfamiliarity with specific resources."
 - Participants explored reasons such as low advertisement, lack of encouragement for training, and high staff turnover.
 - The analysis revealed deeper issues like organizational priorities and systemic barriers.

Next Steps and Homework

- Participants were given two homework assignments:

- Review the whiteboard and think of any additional content or ideas for the next meeting.
- Prepare to discuss barriers to accessible communication and accessibility in general (physical and programmatic) at the next session.
- Allysa Rapadas encouraged participants to continue thinking about the "whys" discussed, as strategies developed may apply to multiple sections.

Meeting Wrap-up

- The task force has shifted to bimonthly meetings with extended duration (1.5 hours) to offset the month without a meeting.
- The next meeting is scheduled for March 10th.
- Nicole Volpenhein emphasized the value of participants' contributions and encouraged reaching out with any questions.
- Dee Grimm thanked everyone for their participation and encouraged continued engagement with the process.

[End of Meeting Minutes]