

Dept. of Health Services: Governor's Health Equity Council releases final recommendations

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The Governor's Health Equity Council (GHEC) voted Wednesday, April 27, on final recommendations. Today, Chairperson Gina Green-Harris and Vice-Chairperson Dr. Michelle Robinson released the [executive summary](#), along with the council's prelude to the full report and the principles it established to govern this work. Established under Governor Tony Evers' [Executive Order #17\(link is external\)](#), the council was charged with creating a comprehensive plan to achieve long-lasting and equitable health outcomes for all Wisconsinites. The executive summary can be found on the DHS website. By voting to approve its recommendations, the council body has fulfilled its charge. Now, council leadership will shift to drafting the full report, including working with council members to finalize recommendations in accordance with approved amendments and revisions. A full report will be available early summer 2022.

"Our primary focus has been targeting social determinants of health, such as economic status, educational attainment, or location — which in turn, determine an individual's ability to be healthy and create the conditions for health outcomes. In the past 18 months, the council has swept through the research, data, practices, and models in order to put forth a plan that will address these upstream factors that drive health disparities in Wisconsin," said Chairperson Gina Green-Harris, Director of Center for Community Engagement and Health Partnerships, UW School of Medicine and Public Health. "These proposals, if enacted, will have significant positive effects on our ability as a state to combat historic and pervasive health disparities across race, economic status, education, geographic location, and history of incarceration."

The council, comprised of various experts in health care, community leaders, and researchers, has identified a set of strategies which members have developed into the proposals. The proposals are described in the executive summary and will be in the full report. In total, the council adopted 20 recommendations representing a variety of policy and implementation approaches aimed at addressing issues such as access and quality of care, reinforcing existing and creating new pathways for economic opportunity, building critical infrastructure to close gaps in accessing technology, and strengthening our ability to proactively respond to threats to our collective wellbeing due to climate change.

“The incredible work of the council, and the time invested to identify some of the best pathways to advance health equity, has been tremendous,” said Vice-Chairperson Dr. Michelle Robinson, Director of the DHS Office of Health Equity. “But as historic as this undertaking is, these proposals, if taken-up, should be viewed as only the beginning of the kinds of policy and systems change needed to truly transform our state in a way that ensures it’s working for all Wisconsinites. We encourage community members, policy and program professionals, and elected officials to read the executive summary, engage and reflect on the proposals that we have put forth, and to drive the work forward. Because ultimately, support and advocacy for these recommendations is what is needed to close health disparities in Wisconsin.”

A full report will be available in Summer 2022. To stay up to date with the council, learn more about its work, committee memberships, and more, visit the [Governor’s Health Equity Council](#) webpage.