



**Vermont Commission on Women  
Health Equity Committee Meeting  
Friday March 8, 2024  
12:00 p.m. – 1 p.m. via teleconference  
MEETING MINUTES**

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[Agenda](#)

**Present:** Nancy Kaplan, Hazel Brewster, Sarah Mell, Karen Cygnarowicz, Ellie Lane

**Absent:** Alex Hilliard

**Presiding:** Nancy Kaplan

**Recording:** Karen Cygnarowicz

**Meeting began at 12:03 p.m.**

- Sarah motioned to approve the meeting minutes from February 8, 2024. Hazel seconded.
  
- All shared personal announcements.
  
- Checked in on Menstrual Products:
  - o Nancy shared an update on the status of the med student mentorship program that she facilitates, as part of their public health rotations. She presented the project as research, a qualitative survey and essay including a compare/contrast maybe rural/urban depending on needs and interest. Preliminary work would be determined in May, and started in September. Nancy asked for staff support to find superintendents or school nurses to interview, and look into follow up legislation. The project may result in strategizing health care communications.
  
- Checked in on Free Standing Birthing Centers:
  - o Nancy mentioned Betsey's reply about midwives, guardrails.
    - How do other states navigate this?
    - Can we look to our advisors?
  - o Sarah wants a stronger conversation with the full commission. Inviting Betsey?
    - What other advisors can we ask? How do we re-engage with advisors?
      - Nancy suggested we add this item to our next agenda: drafting re-engagement with advisors.

- Looked at all VCW policy statements while considering health equity issues of interest.
  - o Sarah asked what is new? What is relevant?
  - o Nancy brought up reproduction rights, asked what is it meant by “health care principles” and how is it different than universal health care?
  - o Sarah asked us to consider what was happening during these years.
  - o Hazel observed that some policy statements cite data and how the data is outdated, and Ellie provided insight that we started to move away from doing so, for that reason.
  - o Prior to meeting, Sarah did a review of past Health Equity-related committees work and noticed a few things:
    - Providing healthy food for kids and nutrition education was a focus, and then shifted in 2018/2019, especially in the pandemic. Food access programs appeared and then disappeared “after” the pandemic.
    - Hearing from youth, what do they care about? What is our future?
    - Policies regarding aging with dignity. Who are our voices around retirement age? Concerning rural isolation.
  - o Nancy brought up workforce, access to care.
  - o Nancy noticed how climate change is not listed but “the environment” is – what can we do about this?
  - o Hazel asked: is it too ambitious to update all of these statements to read 2024?
    - Ellie said there are many options to make this work.
    - Updating all statements though? What are the next steps? Will need to bring to the full commission, requiring complete consensus. Which ones do we want to hone in on? It’s a goal to focus on updating reproductive rights.

Ellie’s baby, Callum, entered the chat.

Next meeting is Friday, April 5, 2024 at 12 – 1 p.m.

**Meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.**