



HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

Monday, October 12, 2020 | 9 – 10 a.m.

Online only

[Contact staff for meeting link information](#)

Commissioners present: Mary Daly (Presiding), Lisa Senecal, Lisa Carlson

Staff: Lilly Talbert (Recording)

Meeting called to order 9:11 a.m.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2020 Minutes

VOTE: Review, discuss and vote to **approve** [draft minutes from June meeting](#).

Lisa S. motion to accept minutes as written; Lisa C. seconds; Mary calls the vote. Minutes approved.

Discussion and planning: Review of work and plan for **nutrition in schools project**.

Prior to the meeting Lisa C. shared a link to [Vermont Farm to School Network's new professional development module series](#) designed for Vermont K-12 teachers implementing food systems, nutrition education, and hands-on learning opportunities into their standards and proficiency-based curriculum. Lisa C. emailed Hunger Free Vermont's Becca Mitchell, and reviewed the recent [Child Nutrition During COVID presentation](#).

Lisa C. contacted Betsy Rosenbluth, who coordinates the VT Farm to School Network, the Northeast Farm to School Collaborative, and serves on the Advisory Board of the National Farm to School Network. Betsy indicated there were many ways in which VCW might assist this effort. Committee members agreed to welcome Betsy to an upcoming meeting, and agreed to prepare for meeting by reviewing the work of [VT Farm to School](#), and by preparing questions.

The committee also discussed a variety of action steps open to them.

Lisa C. reported no action on [S.223](#) | [H.812](#).

Report: Lisa Carlson on **chronic illness in women**

Prior to the meeting, Lisa shared a link to neuroscientist Lisa Mosconi's [TED talk on menopause and brain aging](#). Lisa C. introduced the topic. Health care is inadequate and often doesn't acknowledge gender differences in treatment of chronic health problems or in medical studies. Training practitioners to successfully find root causes, rather than just treating symptoms, using a systemic and wholistic approach which factors in stress, nutrition, exercise and sleep, along with events that impact health over a lifetime, would be more effective and cost less. Lisa C. used the example of depression, which is frequently treated with pills, but can be a symptom of lack of sleep and hormonal changes. Committee members discussed how this approach might be added to medical training in Vermont and what Advisory Organizations they could partner with to learn more. Lisa S. suggested exploring the idea of a medical patient checklist for women, one for different age groups, listing health screenings suggested for that age group, common concerns, and questions to ask of the health care provider. UVM Women's

Health practitioners might be able to help direct, ANA, VDH and PPNNE were Advisors that might be included or consulted.

At Wednesday's full Commission meeting the committee plans to review Advisory Council partners and COVID-19 data points from the Department of Health reports.

VOTE: The Committee reviewed, discussed and recommended to full Commission both the **draft Transgender Women and the Transgender Youth policy statements, as written:**

Transgender Women

The Vermont Commission on Women recognizes transgender women as women in all respects, and is dedicated to the inclusion of transgender women's rights as a fundamental component of full equality for all women. The VCW supports legislation, policies, programs, and initiatives that work to eliminate violence, discrimination, harassment, bullying and stigma of transgender individuals in all settings, including: employment, credit, family law, health care, education, housing and public accommodations, criminal justice, and in other government services, and that promote the equitable treatment of all transgender individuals. The VCW supports equitable and accessible legal remedies for transgender victims of crimes, discrimination, and harassment.

Transgender individuals continue to face harassment, discrimination, violence, and rejection within our society. According to the National Center for Transgender Equality's *2015 U.S. Transgender Survey: Vermont State Report*, transgender people in Vermont self-reported experiencing both unemployment and living in poverty at higher rates, as compared to the general population. Seventeen percent of transgender individuals living in Vermont in 2015 reported experiencing adverse employment decisions in the year prior because of their gender identity or expression, and nineteen percent reported being verbally harassed or mistreated in the workplace in the previous year. Eighteen percent had experienced some form of housing discrimination in the year prior, such as being evicted, or being denied a home or apartment because of being transgender. Seven percent self-reported homelessness in the past year because of being transgender.

Of transgender Vermonters who visited a place of public accommodation where staff or employees thought or knew they were transgender, twenty four percent reported experiencing mistreatment in the year prior, including: twelve percent who were denied equal treatment or service; fifteen percent 15% who were verbally harassed; and one percent who were physically attacked because of being transgender.

Furthermore, twenty seven percent experienced health insurance issues related to being transgender in the past year, such as being denied coverage for care related to gender transition or being denied coverage for routine care because they were transgender. Twenty-nine percent who saw a health care provider in the past year reported having at least one negative experience related to being transgender. This included being refused treatment, verbally harassed, or physically or sexually assaulted, or having to teach the provider about transgender people in order to get appropriate care.¹

Transgender Youth

The VCW supports legislation, policies, programs, and initiatives that support Vermont's transgender

¹ *2015 U.S. Transgender Survey: Vermont State Report*. (2017). Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality.

youth and that work to eliminate violence, discrimination, harassment, bullying and stigma of transgender youth in educational settings.

According to the 2017 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Vermont high school students identifying as transgender were four times as likely to harm themselves and to consider or attempt suicide than their cisgender and heterosexual peers. Those students felt less safe at schools and in communities and less valued compared to their non-LGBT peers of any race. LGBT youth were more likely to be threatened with a weapon, and more likely to have been in a physical fight than their heterosexual, cisgender peers. LGBT students were more than twice as likely to be bullied; three times as likely to experience sexual or physical violence in intimate relationships; and, three times as likely to have been raped.²

Meeting adjourned at 10:01 am

Next meetings:

Monday, Nov 9th, 9 AM

Monday, December 8th, 9 AM

² 2017 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey.