

Minutes of the Community Emergencies and Public Health Committee (CEPH)  
Mayor's International Affairs Advisory Commission  
Zoom Meeting February 9, 2021, 10 a.m.

I. The meeting started with thanks on participating and an **introduction of Commissioners** and guests present by Mr. Innocent Akwa, chair of the Committee. Present in order of introductions were: MIAAC Co-Chair Diana Queen, President of Restorative Justice Center, Christina King, Lexington Fayette Health Department Communications Generalist standing in for Mr. Kevin Hall; Commissioner Dr. Christel Broady, Director of Graduate Programs at Georgetown College, Board of Directors of TOESL and European representative to the MIAAC, Dr. Nkongolo Kalala, Economics Prof at BCTC, representing Africa and Co-Chair of the MIAAC; Dr. Basel Touchan, medical doctor from Syria and district's refugee and immigrant community ambassador with FCPS; Mr. Tim Brandewie formerly with Special Forces Intelligence and currently from the Emergency Operations Center of LFUCG; and UK student Kelso Eberwein, MSW and interested in Public Health and community organizing, Isabel Gereda Taylor in the Mayor's office and Global Lex, Dr. Nadia Rasheed practicing physician, member of KR Council on American Islamic Relations Represents Middle East, and Dr. Rania Belmadani, Global Lex Language Access Specialist, Megan Gula Guest did not speak, and Melissa McCartt-Smyth, Mayor's Boards and Commissions. (There were no prior minutes to approve as this was the initial committee meeting). Mr. Akwa posted the Agenda. He then asked for a co-chair to volunteer from the MIAAC commissioners present. Dr. Broady nominated Dr. Nadia Rasheed and she accepted the nomination. Mr. Akwa then briefly explained the representation and purpose of the Commission and of the CEPH committee to identify and support the immigrant community needs, and to support the health department and emergency operations center.

II. Mr. Akwa asked for a discussion on the second item of the Agenda, the goals of the committee. Dr. Rasheed offered that for the pandemic response the MIAAC must ensure that the immigrant communities know who to call and where to go to sign up for vaccinations. Dr. Broady stated that undocumented populations don't want to show up for vaccinations where ICE can grab them though she said that is not a European perspective. She asked how to communicate and build trust with them. Dr. Touchan said an important point is why you need to get a vaccine. He saw a report on why various groups do or don't want to get the vaccine and didn't see immigrants as a group, but feels it needs to be addressed, effort needs to be made on not only why, but where to get a vaccine. Diana Queen addressed the general question of what is going on at the city council, Mayor's office, and Health Department concerned on topic. Christina King said it is always on their radar and they talk about it, but like the committee, don't know how to go about doing that, they know the challenges, but how do they overcome them? Mr. Akwa asked whether the Health Department is aware of myths regarding the vaccines. Ms King responded that the first two phases don't apply to this question, they aren't there yet. Going in stages. Tim Brandewie reviewed the EOC's broad strategies, people that community trusts, community centers, leaders who speak the languages, whether religious based or other, fairs, places to target limited English speakers and contacts to identify and quantify local immigrant communities. Tim Brandewie mentioned that the EOC works with all of these and more in all areas of EOC preparedness and response. Mr. Akwa then reviewed recommendations included messaging, who to call and where to go for vaccines. How can those goals be reached? Dr. Touchan wanted a system in place similar to the ambassadors program identifying people and responsibilities with respect to topic and language accessibility, translations of information to post. He suggested church leaders be provided information. He described in detail how FCPS provides information on school reopening. Mr. Akwa asked how that information is distributed to other language speakers. Dr. Touchan said the FCPS system flags a family's

language and the system works smoothly though translations to emails. He also mentioned text messages from language access ambassadors. Isabel Taylor mentioned not being able to collaborate as fully as needed with FCPS due to strict rules that are internal to FCPS, but if the EOC Multicultural Desk and the FCPS desk could collaborate to share information that would serve both the schools and the broader community to leverage scarce translation resources. She also shared that the Health Department's 859 number (589-2222) dedicated to Covid-19 calls has multilingual phone interpretation available and everyone has worked hard to relay that to the public. She underscored that fear of all the bad misinformation out in the public needs to be countered. She recommended one of the goals be addressing misinformation through trusted medical personnel. Dr. Broady stated she has close contacts with the FCPS ESL Director to strengthen the relationship and collaboration with them.

Mr. Akwa then turned to the myths circulating in the communities. In review he mentioned Dr. Touchan suggested information translations and the Health Dept's phone number with information in many languages. Dr. Gia Mudd and Rosa Martin's group of Hispanic Health promoters currently working pandemic issues was brought up as part of the information delivery system for the Hispanic community.

When asked, Mr. Brandewie relayed the EOC and the Mayor's office's strong connections with the various religious communities and with FCPS, and their work with Global Lex. Privacy issues are an important consideration for FCPS. Interfaith Councils, churches and more have been best measures for EOC. Dr. Broady asked what can be done to connect with trusted community leaders. Tim responded that the Mayor's office and Isabel's office are the EOC's way to reach out. Dr. Broady said to be more purposeful and get a roster so as not to be as fluid, she asked whether there were names and contacts? Tim said they go to the Multicultural Affairs person as he is on the response side and doesn't keep a roster. Isabel then reviewed the variety of lists and connections, mainly through email lists and the Global Lex newsletter that the public subscribes to and that it is by its nature a very fluid and ongoing process to update and to grow.

Diana Queen asked whether there were still concerns given all the connections, were they sufficient? Isabel responded that no, it is not enough as the community is too large, estimated to be some 72,000 LEP strong and language groups of lesser diffusion are especially difficult to reach. Help is needed, especially during the pandemic. Isabel asked if the Outreach Committee could be a part of the discussion and effort. Diana felt that reaching every language group may be impossible, but the presence of the information may be an attainable goal and the committee should look to working out a plan, not only for the pandemic, but also for future purposes.

After again reviewing goals, Mr. Akwa requested all Commissioner representatives connect with more country leaders. He mentioned knowing a Cameroonian community member as an example. In this regard, Tim Brandewie recommended briefing and creating connections of trust with institutions and civic groups as the EOC, the Mayor's office and Global Lex has done to keep informed and connect with, as individuals leave, but civic groups and churches remain.

Diana Queen wanted clarity prior to rolling out a plan as we are already in the middle of the pandemic. Dr. Rasheed proposed Global Lex staff send her flyers etc. so she can take them and other important information to the Mosque and grocery stores. Isabel Taylor relayed that all notices are sent out from the Mayor's office, from the health department, from the EOC and the Governor's office through the Global Lex newsletter and various other community lists, such as African church leaders, and youth leaders during the pandemic. She asked if these daily notices were working and whether there were recommendations to improve these communications. Mr. Akwa, said to get information thru Isabel to

connectors to distribute on vaccines and pandemic.

Dr. Broady mentioned a problem or barriers of fear of ICE by undocumented. The fear of the vaccines themselves was raised as an important issue to be addressed by both Isabel Taylor and Dr. Touchan who talked about misinformation on the vaccine being a barrier when people don't think they need to take the vaccine, thinking they are immune, etc. Mr. Akwa asked if that was a goal, to educate on myths, and Dr. Touchan agreed that videos with health care professionals talking about the vaccines in their languages and sharing those videos on FB and what's app is important. Dr. Broady suggested two members find out more about the myths in the community and report back to the committee. Mr. Akwa asked for two volunteers to come up with community myths and recommendations on how to address them. Dr. Basel Touchan agreed to help. Mr. Akwa will ask a representative from the Outreach committee. Isabel agreed to help connect Dr. Touchan with Dr. Mudd.

Diana Queen asked what a longer view or a plan for the committee would be. Ms Taylor said that the Mayor's Commission on Racial Justice and Equity had a Health Disparities report and thought it might provide insight to what other minorities experience in health disparities. In the interest of time, Mr. Atkwa asked to postpone further discussion on the longer view and issues that affect the immigrant community for a later meeting.

III. Mr. Atkwa asked for a consensus on future meeting dates for the year. Dr. Rasheed stated she can meet better the last 2 weeks of each month and Dr. Broady said she cannot meet on Wednesdays. Mr. Atkwa, asked for and Dr. Rasheed provided, the MIAAC quarterly meeting dates of Feb 19, May 21, Aug 20, Nov. 19 for reference. Diana Queen reminded that reports must be in a couple of weeks prior to the Executive Committee meetings in order to have them included in that agenda.

Thereafter, the following dates were agreed upon for the CEH committee meetings for 2021: **Thursday, April 29; Thursday, July 29<sup>th</sup>, and Thursday October 28<sup>th</sup> all at 10 a.m.** Mr. Akwa reviewed the discussion centering on pandemic vaccines and how to get information out to the limited English speakers. Regarding myths about the vaccine, Dr. Basel will come back with information on it, and consult with Dr. Mudd. Isabel agreed to work with Basel on communicating and working with Dr. Mudd and Outreach committee chair, Dr. Maske. Dr. Broady asked for a timeline.

Mr. Akwa asked for agreement on an extraordinary meeting to discuss myths and Dr. Touchan's report and findings. **This extraordinary meeting was set for February 25 at 10 a.m.** Melissa McCartt-Smyth will be asked to help organize the zoom link. Mr. Akwa thanked everyone for their time and the meeting adjourned.