



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Health
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July 19, 2024

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Glenn Youngkin
Governor of Virginia

The Honorable L. Louise Lucas
President Pro Tempore, Senate of Virginia

The Honorable Don Scott
Speaker of the House, House of Representatives

FROM: Karen Shelton, MD
State Health Commissioner, Virginia Department of Health

SUBJECT: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan

This report is submitted in compliance with the Virginia Acts of the Assembly – § 2.2-602, which states:

Each agency shall submit an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly by July 1 of each year assessing the impact of the strategic plan on the populations served by the agency and on the agency's workforce and budget.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at (804) 864-7002.

KS/AJ
Enclosure

Pc: The Honorable Janet V. Kelly, Secretary of Health and Human Resources

2024 Virginia Department of Health

Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion Agency Plan

- Agency Goal 1: Maintain a competent and valued workforce
 - Objective 1: Assess workforce engagement and wellness
 - Administer employee engagement surveys. Survey data will be used to develop and modify district, office, and agencywide strategic plans and employee engagement plans.
 - Multiple offices and health districts within the agency will administer employee engagement surveys to their workforce.
 - Target date: 12/31/24.
 - The Public Health Workforce Interest and Needs Survey (PHWINS) will be administered to the VDH workforce.
 - Target date: 10/1/24.
 - Senior leadership will finalize a timeline for administering an employee engagement survey to all VDH staff.
 - Target date: 8/1/24.
 - Objective 2: Staff advance throughout their career at VDH
 - Launch a mentorship pilot program.
 - VDH will design, pilot, and evaluate a mentorship program with a goal of developing connections between new and tenured employees, and increasing engagement for new employees.
 - Target date: 12/31/24.
 - Continue to evaluate and develop career paths for current employees.
 - Offices with existing or in-progress career paths will continue to develop, expand, and implement these pathways for employees.
 - Offices or program areas without career paths will evaluate the possibility of developing this for employees.
 - Target date: 12/31/24.

- Encourage cross training
 - Supervisors and managers will be encouraged to cross train employees for related roles in their workplace. This will allow employees to learn more about other potential roles and provide additional skills training for future career advancement.
 - Target date: 12/31/24.
- Agency Goal 2: Ensure a welcoming and respectful culture
 - Objective 1: Employees provide meaningful feedback
 - Establish an Employee Advisory Council.
 - An Employee Advisory Council will be established. The Council will be responsible for conveying the views and concerns of offices and districts to VDH leadership, advising the Workforce Development and Engagement Director on matters related to workforce wellness, engagement, and culture, and serving as a liaison between VDH staff and agency leadership to increase communication and foster a healthy, connected, and resilient work environment.
 - Target date: 8/1/24.
 - Resources will be provided for employee wellness.
 - Resources like Stress First Aid will be offered to VDH employees.
 - Target date: 12/31/24.
 - VDH will evaluate the upcoming CDC Workforce Resilience tool kit for implementation of programs, initiatives, or resources, and the appropriate level to initially implement. Applicable programs, initiatives, or resources will be implemented in small pilot groups or agencywide, as appropriate.
 - Target date: 9/1/24.
 - Objective 2: Employee concerns are understood
 - Establish, recruit, and hire a new Assistant Deputy Commissioner for Community Health Services who will focus on personnel matters.

- The new Assistant Deputy Commissioner for Community Health Services will work with the Office of Human Resources and local health districts to address employee concerns, especially regarding personnel matters.
 - Target date: 6/1/24.
 - Training will be provided for managers and supervisors on accountability and conflict resolution.
 - Resources and trainings like The Collaborative Way, Clifton Strengths, DISC assessment, etc will be offered to staff in leadership roles throughout the agency.
 - Target date: 12/31/24.
 - VDH will take a proactive approach to preventing employee conflict by ensuring that all leadership has the skill set necessary to be a successful manager or supervisor. A partnership with VCU has been established to provide this training and will be offered to staff in a supervisory role.
 - Target date: 12/31/24.
- Agency Goal 3: Embed DOI into agency practice
 - Objective 1: Resources are available to support DOI initiatives internally
 - Incorporate DOI into the VDH Strategic Plan and the Workforce Engagement Strategic Plan.
 - VDH’s new strategic plan will include objectives related to DOI initiatives.
 - Target date: 8/1/24.
 - VDH’s new Workforce Engagement Strategic Plan will include objectives related to DOI initiatives.
 - Target date: 12/31/24.
 - Work with other state agencies to share best practices and resources.
 - Objective 2: DOI practices are incorporated into work with stakeholders and communities

- Office of Health Equity will curate publicly available, evidence-based health equity resources for VDH staff which will be posted on the OHE webpage on the VDH website.
 - Resources will be cataloged by topic (e.g. telehealth, data & research, community engagement, rural health, etc.) and by end user as appropriate (e.g. public health practitioners, clinicians, community members, etc.). These resources will serve as educational and implementation tools for VDH staff and will be reviewed for relevance and accuracy by the OHE team at least quarterly.
 - Target date: July 1, 2024.
- All local health districts will be trained in how to use the Health Opportunity Index to further advance health equity efforts in communities.
 - Target date: 12/31/24.
- Districts with positions funded through the Health Disparities grant will continue to work closely with the Office of Health Equity on meeting grant objectives and ensuring best practices in implementation.
 - Target date: 12/31/24.
- Elevate the recommendations of the Advisory Council on Health Disparities and Health Equity and incorporate into the strategies of the agency.
 - State Health Commissioner and Workforce Director will continue to attend the Advisory Council meetings and disseminate recommendations to the senior leadership team and inform agency practices and strategies.
 - Target date: quarterly meetings in 2024.